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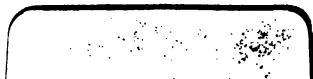
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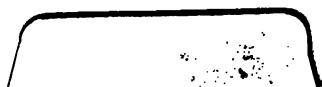
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PROPHETIC OUTLINES.

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PROPHETIC OUTLINES.

(Second Series.)

*THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES, AS
SCRIPTURALLY FORESHADOWED,*

BRIEFLY CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THE LATTER DAYS
OF THE FOURTH KINGDOM.

By JOHN REES-MOGG.

"Until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."—LUKE xxi. 24.



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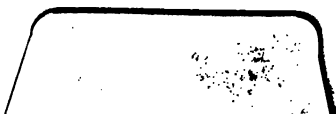
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PROPHETIC OUTLINES.

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upon those who read and hear the words of prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein.

For reasons which I have mentioned, both above and elsewhere, my mind compels me to adopt the mixed, or perhaps I should more correctly say, the historic interpretation, which has become in these latter days almost synonymous with that of the Præterist; but I am far from saying that the whole divine scheme may not admit of a double fulfilment; and that the portion which presents itself to the Futurist as the interpretative realisation of the entire prophecy may not be the concluding scene of the grand drama which for centuries has been continuously developing itself to the Præterist in the successive events of actual history.

But in either case, the end is evidently at hand; and in contemplating that end, and the successive gradations which lead to it, I venture humbly to believe that all the teaching of Scripture is in the direction indicated in the ensuing pages.

Sept. 30, 1868.

PROPHETIC OUTLINES.

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I.

INTRODUCTORY.

IN sketching this further Outline of Prophecy, I desire to confine myself, as much as possible, to the simple statements of Scripture, and, further than the momentary suggestion may arise, I do not wish to indulge in long-drawn arguments, or far-fetched deductions. My firm impression is, that if he who would not believe Moses and the prophets could not be persuaded though one rose from the dead, in like manner no possible amount of proof can infuse conviction into a mind so obdurately closed against the reception of divine truth. But for this purpose, in our reference to Moses and the prophets, those great and undeniable authorities, we are bound to avail ourselves of the aid of experience, and by the light thrown forward by the history of past ages, to contemplate the present, and anticipate the future.

The second advent of our blessed Lord, and all its attendant beatitudes, are the grand object of Christian hope and contemplation, and among the many and various opinions which have been expressed in these our present waiting days, it is marvellous to behold the

A

extraordinary unanimity which prevails amongst men of diverse minds, and different rules of interpretation, as to the urgent and immediate imminency of that long-expected event.

If I understand aught of the action of prophecy, it is a perpetual miracle; the roll, as it is gradually unfolded, identifies its pictures with historic experience, and thereby it proves its truth; and we draw from that proof the certain assurance that the yet unfulfilled portion will be most surely realised, in accordance with the prefigured symbols; but as to the exact mode of fulfilment, or the precise instant of time at which it will take place, we dare not attempt with certainty to predicate. I cannot but think that the aiming at too great precision in this respect, has misled many of our most eminent expositors, and has thus thrown a doubt upon the general interpretation of that portion of Scripture to the study of which an especial blessing has been promised.

Chronologically speaking, the times of the Gentiles begin to be computed from the early announcements made to Daniel; but the wall of partition between the Jew and the Gentile was not broken down until after the ascension of the risen Saviour; and even years then elapsed before Peter and his brother apostles became fully aware, on the occasion of the conversion of Cornelius,¹ the Centurion of the Italian cohort of the Tenth Legion then stationed in Judæa, that, although not one jot or one tittle of the promises of God to His ancient people would fail, yet "of a truth² He is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." And at this time commenced, practically, as I apprehend, the times of the Gentiles, to whom, in succession to the Jew, would be committed the public custody of the sacred oracles until the fulness of the nations should be accomplished; but, alas! with much the same result as they had before been entrusted to the Jews; and the

¹ Acts x. i. See also Henry and Scott's Commentary on this chapter.

² Acts x. 34, 35.

blindness of the one, and the secularism of the other, could not fail to bring about the divine necessity of the second advent, to carry out that great restitution which none but the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world could accomplish. And this is the period which, if I understand correctly, occupies the interval indicated by the two men in white apparel, between the ascension which the disciples had just witnessed, and the return in like manner, for which the Bride is now waiting, and her maidens are in attendance at the door.

A hasty glance at the state of the world, when the dim manifestations of the promised Messiah, and his kingdom of eternal blessedness, were first made to Nebuchadnezzar, and soon after to the prophet Daniel, will show us how utterly the knowledge of the true God had departed from the earth, and how universally Satan had established his ancient usurped dominion. From his first triumph over Adam, even until the time of the Deluge, sin and evil had increased and predominated, until the Almighty declared that His Spirit should not always strive with man;¹ and in His justice He destroyed all save eight souls; and when to that remnant of the primeval race restored to the renovated earth, God had renewed His blessing and His promises, sin again rushed in, and with an ambitious energy which Satan alone could inspire, the descendants of Noah dared to defy the power of the Most High by the erection of the tower whose top should reach to heaven; even then, in His long-suffering mercy, He only rebuked their impiety by the confusion of their common language, and thus forced them to disperse themselves over the earth, by tribes and families, and so to convert their own vain attempt into a new application of the divine plan for the general extension of mankind; but Satan still intervened, and soon, among the newly-formed nationalities, the worship of the living God began to fall away, until at length all remembrance of divine truth was well-nigh forgotten, and the service of Jehovah was superseded by the doctrines of devils.

¹ Gen. vi.

Then, indeed, it again pleased the divine Providence, still unwilling that any should perish, and whose promises have been from the beginning, Yea and Amen, to call from his country, and his kindred, and his father's house the faithful Abram, in whose posterity it was His good pleasure that all the counsels of eternity should be preserved and gradually developed, until the sacrificial advent of the Lamb¹ of God, who should take away the sin of the world; and although, at the times of the divine manifestations to Daniel, the² Israelites were weeping in captivity by the waters of Babylon, in retribution for their repeated idolatries, yet with them alone still remained the sole knowledge of the great I AM; and it is well worthy of remark, that when they were permitted to return to their beloved Jerusalem, great and many as were their subsequent backslidings, they never abandoned the worship which had been divinely instituted among their forefathers. Such, at the time of the prophetic visions to which we have referred, was the condition of the entire world. The Jew, proud of his divinely separated nationality, yet a stiff-necked and unhumiliated captive; the Babylonian kingdom, then predominant alike over Jew and Gentile, grossly and wholly idolatrous; the Medes and Persians, rising into distinction; the Greek states, yet unconsolidated in their brief martial power; and Rome herself, then only in the second century of her national existence, all no less so. And thus Time's centuries rolled on, while the designs of Him to whom yesterday, to-day, and for ever are a perpetual present, were gradually developing themselves for the accomplishment of His unalterable promises of mercy and deliverance to a fallen race, lying in worse than Egyptian darkness. But, intermediately, with regard to the great prophetic chart, yet concurrently with the closing ages of the Fourth Kingdom, occurs a most important era; the prophets do not appear to have intimated, and certainly the disciples themselves did

¹ John i. 29.

² *I may perhaps revert to the consideration of this subject in a separate series.*

not at first understand, how *long* a period would elapse between the completion of the great Atonement, and the final suppression of sin, and commencement of the reign of blessedness,¹ when our Lord, returning in His might and glory, would not only assert, but vindicate against the Power of Evil, His hateful antagonist, the seducer alike and the accuser of the brethren, His first rights of creation, and those more precious of redemption, and then His grand prerogative of mercy, and His godlike power of blending it with perfect justice in the salvation of the lost. This era runs concurrently with the latter ages of the Fourth Beast, until his destruction; and bearing these few preliminary suggestions in mind, I will ask the reader to accompany me in the consideration of the Times of the Gentiles.

II.

EXPECTATION.

THE canon of the Scriptures of the Old Testament had closed; the last of the prophets had announced that the "Sun of Righteousness should arise with healing in His wings,"² and the tribes had long awaited the appearance of that blessed beam,—ages had rolled onward, the fourth century, since the days of Malachi had nearly expired, and during that long interval no further divine manifestation had been granted,—the world had gone on much as we have before described it; yet, it had been almost imperceptibly completing its grand destiny,—the visions of past generations were becoming the realities of the present, and, alike in a spiritual and in a secular sense, the roll of prophecy had more and more displayed the unerring wisdom of its omniscient Author: a spirit of intense expectation had taken possession of the minds of thinking men of every nation under heaven; and alike the Jew and the Gentile, alike

¹ See Acts i. 3-6.

² Mal. iv. 2.

he who believed in Moses and the prophets, and he who treasured the relics of the Sybilline books, no less than the mystic worshipper of Isis, and the luxurious Polytheist of Athens, were all looking with the tension of overwrought anticipation, to the immediate coming of that unknown God-man to whom all power should be given in heaven and in earth.¹

The world was at peace, and for this reason probably men's minds, undisturbed by the usual din of wars, and rumours of wars, were more susceptible to the increased influences of this long prevailing impression. To the Jew, indeed, deeply versed in the Scriptures of truth, yet reading them with the veil before his eyes, the assured faith in the coming of his promised Redeemer had never ceased to be the bright Day-star of all his hopes; it had consoled him in captivity; it had sustained him in deep national depression, and he still clung with unwearied tenacity to the promises made to his fathers of old time; for he knew that the sceptre² should not finally depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh should come; and thus, in the very decadence of his nationality, he saw the unerring proof of the approaching completion of that patriarchal prophecy. He saw the early advent of the Messiah, who should not only restore all things in the Jewish state, but should exalt the nation to be the chiefest of all the nations of the earth, and should be Himself their all-glorious King, whose dominion should never pass away; nor did he read wrongly the records of ages which had been deposited in his charge as the great witness to the world of the ways of God to man; but he applied not that reading to the practical illustration of their hidden truths. To those of the tribe of Judah who regarded with the devotion of assured faith the ancient prophecy of their race to which I have referred, the condition of their national affairs in the generation immediately preceding the birth of the Redeemer must have been a subject of most anxious *consideration*, for although the sceptre had not de-

¹ Matt. xxviii. 18.

² Gen. xlix. 10. See also Isa. vii. 16.

parted from them, it was held by one who, if claiming it in right of the regal descent, was yet only a Jew by adoption and alliance, and was indebted for his succession to the throne to the great Gentile Power whom the descendants of Abraham could only hold in abomination as idolaters, however they might have been obliged to bend the stiff neck to their yoke, as the people terrible and strong exceedingly.

The holder of that sceptre at this momentous period was "Herod the king,"¹ and we may thus briefly trace the right in which he claimed it. John Hyrcanus, at once high priest and prince of Judæa, having greatly restored and extended his dominions, died about 107 B. C., and was succeeded by his eldest son Aristobulus, who, for the first time after the Babylonian captivity, resumed the title of king. He was succeeded by Alexander Jannæus, his eldest surviving brother, on whose death his eldest son, Hyrcanus the Second, obtained, first, the high priesthood, and ultimately, after a struggle with his brother, Aristobulus the Second, the throne. To Hyrcanus the Second succeeded Antigonus, one of the sons of Aristobulus the Second, but he was opposed by Herod, the son of Antipas or Antipater, an Idumæan,² who had embraced Judaism in the reign of Hyrcanus the First, and had thereby obtained the national rights, and had also become the Roman procurator at the Judæan court. Herod, to fortify and further his interest with the people, had taken to wife Mariamne, the daughter of Alexander, one of the sons of Aristobulus the Second, and brother of Antigonus his rival, by Alexandra, daughter of Hyrcanus the Second, who was thus grand-daughter of two of the preceding kings; and thereby he vested in himself a large portion of the family rights of sovereignty, together with the political influence of Rome, who rendered him also the aid of her forces then in Syria; but, to complete the security of his

¹ Matt. ii. 1. Rollin's Ancient History, book xxi. Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia—Outlines of History.

² Edomite, or descendant of Esau.

position, he brought about the execution at Antioch of Antigonus, who had surrendered to Socius, the Roman general, and thus over the land of Judah he became indisputably "Herod the king."

Nor less firmly in the Gentile world had the belief become a rooted principle of faith, and even ardent aspiration, that a new and holy progeny was about to descend from heaven, to renovate the earth, and restore the Saturnian times; the Roman, more superstitious than the Jew, more politic in worldly wisdom, and guided by the subtle influences of the spirit whom, under five hundred varying names and characters, he had been accustomed to worship, beheld him in his own Cæsar, and saluted his living Imperator with the title Divus,¹ and let us observe, in passing, that this is a very singular historical fact, and, I may add, wonderful sign of those times, well worthy the serious consideration of the earnest student of prophecy in relation to its worldly accomplishment, that at the very period when the Jews were in immediate expectation of their long foretold and heaven-descended Prince, the fourth Gentile kingdom, though in the zenith of its power, wearied with the insufficiency of mere human government, should invest their own Augustus with the attributes of deity, and thus recognise in a mortal being the coming Great One, whose real advent to His chosen people, ushered in by signs and miracles and halleluiahs of angelic choirs, the unbelieving Jew had scornfully rejected. Thus did the great Volume of prophecy continue to unroll itself, among the Gentiles dimly; among the Jews clearly and intelligibly, would they have perceived its manifestations; but for the ignorance of the one, and the hardness of heart of the other, when the grand era arrived each and all were utterly unprepared for its reception. Nevertheless, while these things were taking place, the world at-large

¹ Præsens Divus habebitur

Augustus—

says Horace iii. 15,

addressing Augustus, and we find Virgil speaking of him in like language.

was making progress ; and, whether for good or evil, it was rapidly approaching the point which would divide it from all foregoing ages, and usher in a new dispensation. The Heir was about to claim His own inheritance, it will be for us hereafter to consider how His Father's subjects received their Prince.

III.

ADVENT.

THE Shiloh came, and soon thereafter the sceptre departed from Judah. A year had not elapsed from the birth of our Saviour when Herod the king was called from his earthly sovereignty, and Archelaus, his son, did reign in Judæa in his room ; he was soon after deposed and banished by the Emperor Augustus, and with him the sceptre,¹ departed from Judah, and the prophecy of Jacob received its accomplishment.

The Gentile had indeed already imagined, and even acknowledged the coming deity in the person of Augustus ; but over the heart of the Jew the veil had been imposed which kept him back from the recognition of the true Messiah who had come among them.

To the consideration of the long line of Messianic prophecies, and their literal, as well as their spiritual fulfilment, it is not needful now to advert ; the Saviour Himself announced at a very early period of His public ministry, on the occasion of His nocturnal interview with the inquiring Nicodemus,² that "this was the condemnation, that light was come into the world, and that men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." A fearful sentence, but one of which the practical truth is even now from day to day becoming more unfolded, the twilight retina of purblind humanity is unable to receive the brilliant impressions from the rays of the Sun of Righteousness,

¹ I speak here simply of the sceptre of Judah over Judæa.

² John iii. 19.

and more and more we become immersed in the crass darkness of wilful error.

True it was that the aged Simeon had recognised in the Babe born at Bethlehem the Salvation which had been promised to his eyes before he should see death ; and he blessed God for the exhibition of the light that should lighten the Gentiles, and should be the glory of his people Israel ; and, according to his prayer, he departed in peace. True it also was that many Israelites indeed, and without guile, had in like manner accepted the gracious Messiah, and with Nathanael¹ had confessed that He was the "Son of God ; that He was the King of Israel."

But upon the nation at large the dark veil rested, and that exclamation which the Jews uttered in the rage of their rebellion against the Heir whom they cast out and crucified, was but the echo of the shout of the whole civilised world ; "We have no king but Cæsar." And thus while the Gentile was anticipating a worldly Elysium, a return of his poetic golden age, and in the Augustine era thought that he beheld it ; the proud and learned Jew, though no less expecting the restoration of the kingdom to Israel in a state of temporal splendour, before which the glories of David or of Solomon would have been but the glimmerings of early morning, would not perceive in the humble Son of the carpenter Him "in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."² Whence came this wonderful, mental hallucination which thus overshadowed the whole earth ; which shut out the truth, or rather distorted it to the eye ; and returned a false echo of it to the ear ? which gave prominence to a falsehood and currency to a lie ? It was the working of that same spirit which for well-nigh four thousand years had held his usurped authority over God's own creation ; and, at the time of which we are speaking, seeing the inevitable commencement of his own decadence and final destruction, yet anxious to postpone his day of doom, *had said to the young Heir in His temptation, when he*

¹ John i. 49.

² Col. ii. 9

showed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time: "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me all shall be thine." A testing proposition; but He to whom it was addressed well knew, even in His human nature, that it was a lying usurper who addressed Him, and that it was the agony of despair which prompted that suggestion.

The time of salvation and atonement had arrived—the time when man by Christ should make perfect satisfaction for the ruin which our first father had worked in Eden, and thus complete the gracious promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; but there was a long interval of deadly struggle yet to come; and it was ordained in the councils of eternity that none but God Himself should finally destroy all evil, and bring back a lost and ruined creation to its original state of Paradisaical blessedness—nor is it for us to inquire what were the causes of these long series of vast events—sufficient is it for us to know that they had been foreshadowed in the entire line of prophecy, and that their evident and plain object was the glory of God Himself in the final salvation of that lost race whom He had originally created in His own image and likeness. Indeed, our Saviour was Himself most particular that neither His chosen apostles, nor His many disciples, nor even His general hearers, or His Church at large, should be mistaken on this point.

Accepting His royal rights as Prince and King, nay, more, His claims to Deity itself, even before His earthly judge, He perpetually cautioned those around Him from entertaining the expectation of the immediate establishment of His temporal kingdom, although He no less emphatically assured them that *that* kingdom would finally come, not only in its grace and spirit, but in its grand realisation of royalty and splendour.

This is a very important point in our present consideration, and we cannot much err in citing some of

our Lord's leading observations upon it; for we may be well assured that if whatever the prophets of old announced with regard to Him was verified to the letter, much more will every word which He uttered, as to Himself and the kingdom which He then came to claim, be indisputably established. Our blessed Saviour came in the fulness of the appointed time, the seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head; or, as was more plainly expressed by the apostle, "The Son of God manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil;"¹ and this He went about perpetually doing, from the time when He foiled the tempter in the wilderness to the supreme hour when from the Cross on Calvary He exclaimed, in His mortal agony, "It is finished." And what was finished? The primeval promise was accomplished. The head of the serpent had been bruised by the seed of the woman.

The great atonement had been once for all offered up, divine justice was satisfied, and man was released from his original condemnation, and restored to the salvation which he had forfeited. Yes, the serpent's head was bruised, but it was *bruised* only; bruised mortally, it is true, but bruised only; and in the high councils of omnipotence a yet lengthened period would be permitted to elapse ere the mortal struggle of the diabolic principle of evil should be fully terminated, and Satan should be finally expunged from the universe, and God's kingdom should be established in all its glory. Very early in our Saviour's public ministry He had announced His gracious purposes, and while He taught that the kingdom of heaven was at hand; yea, even in the midst of them, He no less clearly warned His disciples that *then* was not the time at which His temporal reign of blessedness would be established; though it was not until after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost that the darkness was fully dispelled from their minds, and they perceived the full value of the great redemptive sacrifice, and the new *dispensation of grace* and mercy which, preparatory to

¹ 1 John iii. 8.

the final triumph, was to supersede the ritual and typical forms and ceremonies of the Mosaic law—a law which our Lord emphatically declared He came “not to destroy, but to *fulfil*.”¹ It is no part of our present plan to trace that wondrous fulfilment; Peter to the Jews and dwellers in Jerusalem;² and again to the men of Israel in the temple;³ and to Annas and his kindred;⁴ Stephen at his martyrdom;⁵ Philip in Samaria, and to the Eunuch;⁶ Peter, once more to the Centurion⁷ Cornelius; Paul, to the Jews at Antioch;⁸ and indeed every apostle and servant of the Lord, whose acts are recorded and whose epistles are preserved, unlearned and ignorant men though they mostly were,⁹ have each in his turn, and in his own course of inspiration, “begun at the Scripture and preached Jesus!”¹⁰

But they only repeated the teaching of their and our own great Master, who, after His rising again, condescended to explain to His chosen ones, and through them to us, the wondrous mystery of His incarnation, death, and glorious resurrection; witness His journey with them on their walk of mourning, when He deigned to enlighten their understandings, and to show them the divine necessity of all that had taken place, and then “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”¹¹ Well might their hearts burn within them, while He talked with them by the way; for such a commentary upon prophecy fulfilled had never before been uttered to mortal ear.

In His early sermon on the Mount, when the Saviour teaches His disciples how to pray, one of the first branches of the formula which He gives them is in these words, “Thy kingdom come;”¹² thus plainly intimating that they whom He addressed were yet to expect some new development of blessedness, some yet unarrived era, when the divine will should be done on

¹ Matt. v. 17.² Acts ii. 14.³ Acts iii. 12.⁴ Acts iv. 6.⁵ Acts vii. 59.⁶ Acts viii.⁷ Acts x.⁸ Acts xiii.⁹ Acts iv. 13.¹⁰ Acts viii. 35.¹¹ Luke xxiv. 13, et seq.¹² Matt. vi. 10.

earth, even as it is ever done in heaven itself, by those who stand before the throne in dutiful and joyous expectancy of service. In many other ways did the Messiah intimate that His then advent was not, as had been supposed, the closing scene of the world's drama, and the final suppression of evil; nor did the spirit of evil himself so look upon that great event, for we thus find the possessed in the country of the Gergesenes, apostrophising Him whom they were forced to acknowledge to be the "Son of God,"¹ with the deprecatory exclamation, "Art thou come hither to torment us *before the time?*" Indeed the fourth kingdom was, at the very period now under consideration, in its greatest strength, and that portion of the image which symbolised it would yet long sustain the faded head, and heavy body, before the mingled clay and iron of which it was composed, strong, yet friable, should give way under the incumbent weight which would finally be cast down in the utter dust of the ruin of ages, and be blown away by the wind from the threshing-floor; and not even yet has this time arrived, though all things around us indicate the close approach of that long expected event.

It is indeed evident from the inquiry of the disciples (Matt. xxiv. 3), that they perfectly understood from Christ that He would come again; their question is threefold;—first, When shall these things be?—that is, the denunciations pronounced upon Jerusalem in the preceding chapter, and the destruction of the temple, which He had just quitted; secondly, What shall be the sign of thy coming? and thirdly, of the end of the world?² and the answer which He gives to them is very full. The destruction of the temple, and of Jerusalem, the second coming of the Saviour, and the end of the world were to the minds of the disciples synchronous events; and our Lord, while He replied to their inquiries, did not, in His wisdom, deem it requisite to distinguish those events from each other; but He laid down a series of signs which, as they should occur,

¹ Matt. viii. 29.

² Age, or Dispensation.

would be unmistakable as to the result which might be immediately impending; He explained in words, which cannot be misunderstood, that He would Himself come again, and this is His language: "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."¹ And in a subsequent chapter, He says: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory."² But the crowning assurance of the second personal advent of our blessed Lord is that given at the time of His ascension, when disappearing from the sight of the apostles in the clouds of heaven: "As he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."³ I scarcely deem it necessary to pursue further the scriptural investigation on which is founded the great doctrine of the first advent, and its object the promised bruising of the serpent's head; and the consequent long spiritual and material struggle of Satanic malignity against the prevailing intercessory power of the Mediatorial Prince, until the period of His grand and triumphant return; the long struggle which will terminate in this glorious result may be considered to have commenced at the well-known period of the temptation of Jesus, to which we have before referred, when Satan sought to obtain from Him the recognition of His ancient usurpation; and it will not cease to rage until

¹ Matt. xxiv. 27.² Matt. xxv. 31.³ Acts i. 10.

the arrival of the time of the end when Messiah shall be finally crowned "King of kings and Lord of lords."

I would, however, desire, before proceeding further, to give a few moments to the consideration of the state of the world, Jewish, Gentile, and Christian, from the time of the first advent to the close of the canon of the New Testament by the Revelation of St. John, and this we may best do in a separate chapter.

IV.

TO PATMOS.

THE great Augustan era was indeed a brilliant period, it was an era whose rays have illumined even these darksome ages; yet was its light rather the glare of a worldly torch than of a celestial beam; and when the Sun of Christianity arose with healing in His wings, the earthly vapours soon became diffused amongst the heavenly ether, and men began to prefer that mixed and debased medium to the purer and lighter atmosphere of the world's circumambient clouds, and truly they did so, because their deeds were evil. Thus that bright period soon began to fade into twilight, and finally into darkness. The Jew had become scattered amongst all nations. The Gentile ignorant, darkened, superstitious, in name a Christian, was still in reality an idolater; yet occasionally, and at fitful intervals, shone forth by divine permission, some bright luminary, and while the mountain tops coruscated with the celestial light, it but sufficed as it disappeared to show how thick was the darkness in which Satan had enveloped the world. And even to the present day this is so, and if there be a remnant, as there was in the time of Elijah,¹ of seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal, we may well thank Him who has preserved that little flock, and entreat Him speedily to

¹ 1 Kings xix. 18.

accomplish the number of His elect ones. And these are the confines, this the height of the struggle at which we have now well-nigh arrived, the verge and the boundary which divides the quaternion of worldly kingdoms from the reign of bliss. All, so far as relates to man's redemption, was accomplished nearly nineteen hundred years ago; the announcements of prophecy have been developing themselves into history during that long period, and little, if aught, now remains unfulfilled before the inauguration of the coming kingdom. And that coming kingdom—are not its confines almost in view before us? Does not everything betoken the early advent of a mightier and a purer dynasty than has ever yet ruled the earth, to renew that which is become so dilapidated and destroyed, that it is beyond the power of man to sustain, much less to restore, the tottering fabric, which, originally built up by him, has now become an indistinguishable heap of brick, and sand, and ruin, as incapable of reconstruction as his now scarcely discoverable Babel? But we anticipate results; let us scan briefly the large field around us, as comprehensively as we can, for the correct understanding of the present, and the apprehension of the future, so far as light has yet been granted to us, rest upon it.

At the time of the ascension of our Saviour, the iron legs of the image were still strong and apparently colossal; the fourth beast was in the rampancy of his strength, and the sixth or imperial head¹ was the prevailing power which guided the energies of that mighty frame, and over all the kingdoms of the then known world the sway of Rome was paramount. Judæa herself, reduced from a tributary kingdom to a province, retained yet her city and her temple, and to a certain extent enjoyed her national institutions. The mustard seed of Christianity had been sown, and although im-

¹ Rev. xvii. 10—"And there are," says the interpreting angel, "seven kings; five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come." Five forms of constitutional government had passed away in Rome—kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, and military tribunes; the sixth or imperial dynasty, commencing with Octavius, or Augustus, was at this time in power.

mediately after the effusion of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost there was a miraculous increase in the Church of such as should be saved, Satan had already been employed in raising a plentiful crop of tares among the thriving produce ; and, alas ! it is in this corrupted state that we shall be obliged to view, in its past and present, the common faith once delivered to the saints. Paul had preached, Apollos had watered, and God had graciously given the increase ; the Acts of the Apostles, and their various subsequent epistles record how vast a success had attended the first ministrations of those early preachers of the gospel ; but they no less truly inform us of the heresies and schisms which at that primitive period had perplexed the teachers, and of the insidious inroads which the enemy had already made into the congregations of the faithful ; but still the Word of God grew and increased, the stone which the builders had at first rejected was yet surely and firmly laid, and as the goodly structure became developed in its perfect proportions, it more and more stood forth as the head-stone of the corner.

But the time was rapidly approaching when the prophetic lamentation of our Saviour over the city and the temple would be fearfully verified ; the generation to whom it had been uttered had not passed away when the Jews broke out into rebellion¹ against the Roman power, which ended in their apparent annihilation as a nation, the destruction of their city, and the overthrow to its very foundation of the magnificent temple whose fate had been so sadly foretold—and Rome herself still went on in her imperial strength, and though the universal tranquillity which reigned at our Saviour's birth had under succeeding emperors during the latter half of the first century been interrupted by wars and tumults and disturbances ; and even the convulsions² of nature had rivalled in their fury the destruction of the ancient cities of the plain ; the latter portion of that

¹ A.D. 70.

² *Eruption of Vesuvius, and destruction of Herculaneum, Pompeii, and the adjacent district.*

period beheld the commencement of a series of so-called *good* emperors, beneath whose beneficent sway the mistress of the world maintained, and even extended, the universal empire which she had acquired. Meanwhile the Christian, still despised and rejected, had, with many persecutions, and much worldly contempt and tribulation, cherished his humble and often concealed faith; waiting, in earnest anticipation, for the second coming of the Lord of Life in all His promised glory. Many remained of the generation who had conversed with the Messiah, had witnessed His miracles, had heard His teaching and His prophecies, had beheld His crucifixion, had even possibly been present at His ascension, and heard the angelic promise of His return; and though many had now ceased to walk with them, and they were often in perils, no less among false brethren than amongst the heathen themselves, yet their faith failed them not, for the sufficiency of grace sustained them, and they knew in whom they had trusted. And indeed the apostles had sedulously kept the great truth of the second coming of our Lord before the minds of the converts; Paul,¹ while impressing upon the Corinthians the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, had laid before them the order of that grand and until now unimagined mystery. "Christ," says he, "the first fruits; afterward, they that are Christ's *at His coming*;" and he tells the Colossians, when touching on the like subject, "*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear*, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."² And again, he thus addresses the Thessalonians, "*The Lord himself shall descend* from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first;"³ and in the next chapter he prays that "their whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."⁴ But as probably the announcements in his first epistle might have excited in the minds of the Thessalonians too great an expectation of the im-

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 23.² Col. iii. 4.³ 1 Thess. iv. 16.⁴ Ver. 23.

mediate arrival of the Saviour, he warns them in his next letter, that before that event shall occur, there shall be a great falling away, and a revelation of the man of sin, "whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders."¹ Nor herein was Peter less explicit, when he reminds his converts that "we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ;"² and that apostle even foresaw that scoffers would inquire where was the promise of the coming of the Lord? but answering them by anticipation, he says, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night."³ And, finally, Jude, adopting the then traditional prophecy of Enoch, says, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints."⁴ And thus were the Christians alike warned and encouraged; and towards the close of the first century to which we have just hastily referred, the faith had greatly spread, churches had been established in Judæa, in Asia, in Greece, and at Rome, and many other places of the then civilised world; and more and more intense had become the ardent expectation of the immediate return of Him whose second advent had been thus announced.

But during the interval to which this chapter refers, a new dispensation had taken place; the Jew had rejected his Messiah, and had been himself rejected from his stewardship. Blotted out from the list of nations; his Temple, first abandoned,⁵ then destroyed; his faith spurned, as contemptible; yet his innate obstinacy unbent, and his pride unhumbled; he had compelled the apostles, after long strivings of spirit, to turn from him to the Gentiles, and thus to the Gentiles became committed the future preaching of the Word of Truth. So, practically succeeded to the rejecting and now rejected

¹ 2 Thess. ii.—See also 1 Tim. iv.

² 2 Pet. i. 16.

³ 2 Pet. iii. 10.

⁴ Jude 14.

⁵ "Let us remove hence," was the voice heard by the priests *going into the inner court of the Temple*.—Josephus' *Wars of the Jews*, vi. 3.

Jew, the last struggle, long, intense, and deadly, which is now arriving at its great conclusion ; a conclusion which Deity alone can bring about, for man in each character has proved himself utterly incompetent. And this changed dispensation marked the times of the Gentiles to whom, in succession to the Jew, were entrusted the oracles of eternity ; but weighed in every balance, and in each found wanting, man Noachic,¹ man Jew, man Gentile, had, or even now has, utterly failed ; and only the return of the Heir himself, and His assumption of the kingdom into His own hands can restore all things. This great restoration, after a period long and troublous, yet ending in final convulsion, more fearful than has ever been experienced, had been suggested by our Lord during His first sojourn upon earth ; for it was His intention that His disciples should be constantly on the watch for His second coming ; but it pleased Him more fully to foreshadow to His expecting Church the scenes which should precede, and, finally, usher in the great inheritance prepared for the blessed children of the Father from the foundation of the world. As, indeed, had been vouchsafed to the captive seer at Babylon, the man greatly beloved, in the season of the deep distress of his people, the prophetic record of the secular revolutions ; so also was now unfolded to the disciple whom Jesus in life had loved, now an aged prisoner at Patmos, the yet long vista of the latter times, alike in explanation of the new dispensation of grace and truth in its relation to the still dominant fourth beast, and as introductory to that new kingdom which was to supersede the worn-out powers of an age rushing inevitably to its final ruin. The influences brought into action by Christianity have exercised so wonderful an effect upon the decline of the fourth kingdom, and, at the same time, have opened

¹ I scarcely know what other distinctive epithet to adopt ; I mean man between the time of the Deluge, and the call of Abram ; I had thought of using the expression man *uncovenanted*, but it would have been incorrect, for there was a great covenant with Noah, which, had it been kept by his posterity, would have rendered unnecessary the call of Abram.

to our contemplation so solemn a vision of the mortal struggles of this closing cycle—struggles which mark the now current days of the times of the Gentiles, that, judging by events fulfilled, and in daily course of fulfilment, in accordance with past prophecy, we can only draw from the visions of the apostle the like explanations to those which the explaining angel gave to his illustrious predecessor, and reverently accept the manifestations to John the Divine, as only more minute symbols of the then coming centuries which at a longer distance had been dimly revealed to Daniel. That portion of the Apocalyptic Book which describes the celestial visions of the opening of the seals; the sounding of the trumpets; and the outpouring of the vials, with their accompanying explanatory ceremonies, appears to me in its primary elucidation to symbolise, with extraordinary fidelity, the decline and fall of the fourth kingdom; and, whatever may be its secondary application, I am assured that we cannot err in receiving it as an exposition of the heavenly councils with regard to these ages now almost concluded.

But we must refer these considerations to the next chapter, and I will here merely observe, that in my humble endeavour to apply those visions to the times of the Gentiles, I shall chiefly rely upon the learned work of Mr. Elliott,¹ and his early Protestant predecessor, Fleming. But, unless I greatly err, the plain signs of our times are sufficient to make prophecy its own scriptural interpreter,—beholding them, let us look up, and gather from our prayerful observation that our redemption from a Satanic bondage draweth nigh, yea, it is even at our doors.

¹ *Horæ Apocalypticæ.*

V.

FIRST FOUR SEALS.

THE first century of the Christian era had well-nigh reached its termination when the disciple, whom Jesus had loved, now an aged man, was awaiting, a prisoner in the isle of Patmos, the accomplishment of the saying of his Divine Master to Peter respecting him, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"¹ And the time of that coming was close at hand, and great was the honour laid upon that distinguished saint in the wondrous revelation of the future history of Christ's Church and kingdom, presented to him while he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, in that rugged place of slavery. He had already been commissioned with the messages of encouragement, of warning, and of rebuke to the seven then existing churches in Asia, but he had a larger sphere of prophetic vision yet before him, and it is this panoramic view which we propose briefly to examine.

The apostle is called by a trumpet voice in heaven, "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter."² And immediately he was in the Spirit, and to his rapt gaze was disclosed a sight never before vouchsafed to human eye.

Admitted to the divine council-room of heaven, he beheld its "rainbow-circled throne, and Him that sat thereon." It was surrounded by those lower thrones whereon sat four and twenty crowned and white-robed elders; and before the throne the seven lamps of fire and the sea of glass; and in perpetual attendance were the four wondrous *living creatures*, chiefs of the angelic

¹ John xxi. 22.

² Revelation iv. 1, *μετὰ ταῦτα*, more correctly, instead of *hereafter*, "after these things;" *i.e.*, after the present state of affairs in the earth, then wholly Roman; and probably irrespective of the special messages sent to the churches of Asia, although they soon began to realise the warnings addressed to them.

hosts,¹ ever engaged in executing the behests of Him that sat upon that throne. And amid lightnings and thunderings, and voices, like as on Sinai of old, the great history of the future purposes of God to man, during the long struggle of the Christian dispensation, was revealed to the aged seer.

At the right hand of Him² that sat upon the throne lay the mysterious seven sealed volume, or roll, which none in heaven could open; none even could decipher its external writing. But there was joy in heaven, for the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, had prevailed to open that book, and to loose those seven seals; and thus, transferred from the mystic symbol of prophecy to the accomplished facts of history, we read the wondrous roll which was then unfolded.

The first seal was opened; and, as with a noise of thunder, is heard the summons of the first of the four living creatures to "come and see."³

"And I saw, and beheld a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."

We must consider briefly the symbols of this vision; it will assist us in unfolding the subsequent scenes presented to the apostle.

The *horse*⁴ was the recognised emblem of the

¹ This is the correct translation of the original *τίσσασα ξῖνα*, but I have preferred in this sketch, intended strictly for popular perusal, to preserve in subsequent quotations the word "beasts," which is the rendering of the authorised English version.

² Rev. v.

³ Rev. vi. i.

⁴ Elliott's *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, vol. i. p. 120, *et seq.*

I am aware that it has been considered a presumptuous explanation of these symbols to apply them to the mere secular affairs of the Roman empire, but I am unable to receive this objection into my mind; or at all events to allow much force to it. All the prophets have spoken of the Gentile nations of antiquity under what I may venture to call their distinctive *heraldic* ensigns. See, for instance, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and many other examples. *The interpreting spirit* explained these signs as applicable for the *time being to the respective nations*, and therein I think we are *furnished with a true principle for general interpretation.*

Roman military power, then culminating to its zenith, and the *white horse* was the especial attribute of the victorious general to whom, returning from a successful campaign, the senate awarded the honours of a triumphal procession. Short time elapsed after the revelation in Patmos ere the accession of Nerva (A.D. 96) to the imperial purple; he was a Cretan¹ by extraction, and the emblem, the *bow*, the national weapon of those islanders, marked his provincial origin. To him, as the successful general, the crown of the empire was *given*; he acquired it not by inheritance, but he was himself the elected founder² of a new dynasty, which, by subsequent descent, or by adoption, wielded the Roman sword, and for a period of about a century, to use the language of the inspired writer, that dynasty "went forth conquering and to conquer;" and of this dynasty were Nerva, its founder, and his successors Trajan, Adrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius, until the period of external conquest and internal peace ceased in the person of his son Commodus, about the year 192.³ And thus that vision passed away in the reality of its fulfilment, and the next seal was opened, and the like formal solemnities attended the new development.

"And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see; and there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword."⁴

No longer does the Roman military power go forth

¹ Crete was peopled from that part of Palestine situated on the Mediterranean coast, called in Hebrew Crethim, or by the seventy *Κεῖρες*; some of whom were in the service of David as his life-guard.—Elliott, i. 134, and the scriptural authorities cited by him.

² "Raised to the throne by the senate."—Sismondi, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, i. 33.

³ "No period in history," says Sismondi, "presents such a succession of good and great men upon any throne."—*Fall of the Roman Empire*, i. 33.

⁴ *Rev. vi. 3.*

conquering and to conquer; the triumphant white horse no longer bears the imperial rider; the colour of the charger is changed to the blood-red hue of internal desolating wars; no longer the victorious leader of united hosts against the foreign foes of the empire, the imperator finds himself at home in the midst of treasons, and tumults, and rebellions; the long existing internal peace has been taken from the Roman earth, and by the power of the sword alone can the imperial authority, with difficulty, and passing rapidly from hand to hand, be maintained—and thus it was from the time of the assassination of Commodus in the year 192.¹ The power of the soldiery began to predominate over the constitutional authority, the Prætorian Legions swayed the government, and invested their own creatures with the imperial purple, and as readily deposed and massacred them; and these were the first open and apparent symptoms of the break-up of that mighty empire. The white horse had passed away for ever—the red horse had succeeded, emblem of present intestine tumults, and herald of forthcoming and accompanying troubles. Let us continue the prophetic history: “And when he had opened the third seal,² I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair³ of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.”

Thus consequent upon the internal dissensions of the empire arose naturally, and in a great degree even concurrently, a vast increase in its taxation, and the

¹ “With his death,” says Sismondi, “commenced the third and most calamitous period, that which we have characterised as the period of upstarts. It lasted ninety-two years, A.D. 192–284.”—*Fall of the Roman Empire*, i. 36.

This period, which Sismondi calls the third, embraces very nearly the time occupied by the second, third, and fourth seals.

² Rev. vi. 5.

³ *Zuyon* is also translated “yoke,” but in either case the emblem is susceptible of the same explanation.

provinces especially experienced that distress of nations which is the result of heavy fiscal exactions. The balance was the frequent emblem of the proprætor, or provincial governor, and the imperial revenue was rendered chiefly in kind, according to the staple produce of the district,—wheat or barley, oil or wine, as the country and the climate might bring forth.¹ The Emperor Caracalla had made the privileges of the Roman city co-extensive with the limits of the empire, and the consequence had been that the provinces, though raised to the dignity of citizenship, yet paid heavily for the honour, as, in addition to their former local tributes, they were also saddled with the distinctive taxes of the Roman citizens, and thus the burdens upon the commonalty became almost intolerable; this soon began to exemplify itself, first in private distress, then in public perplexities, and when the third seal was opened about 220, soon after the death of Caracalla, well might the bearer of the provincial scales ride forth upon the black horse, emblem of hardship and grinding oppression; and thus again the history of the times is but too true an illustration of the gloomy prophecy.² In many, not only of the distant conquered provinces, but of the districts nearer to the capital, extensive tracts of land had gradually gone out of cultivation in consequence of the inability of the inhabitants, reduced to utter destitution by the enormous pressure of taxation, to keep up the due course of tillage, until at length large portions of what had been most fertile lands were literally reduced to the condition of desolate wastes.

Thus did this opened seal disclose another and yet darker view of the declining fortunes of the mighty Roman empire; but it was only to give place, in inevitable sequence, to a yet more appalling picture.

And thus does the prophetic historian open up

¹ For an example of this render in kind, see the Parable of the Unjust Steward, Luke xvi. 1.

² Sismondi — Fall of the [Roman Empire, vol. i. 19-38, *et seq.*

another scene of the impending future of the declining empire :—

“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him: and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.”¹ It requires little discernment to read the application of this emblem; and history thus furnishes its practical solution. The pale horse² and his rider Death, followed by Hell (Hades) were the inevitable result of the distress and straightness of the severe taxation under the third seal.³ Agriculture neglected had produced wasting famines, and consequent pestilences; the immense tracts of uncultivated lands had left many parts of the empire to wild beasts, which had multiplied prodigiously; and the inroads of barbarians, and fierce internal struggles, distracted every province. And with this seal cease the voices of invitation of the four living creatures in heaven; and the horse, emblem of Roman military power, passes from the scene. This fearful consummation began to take place about the year 248, in the time of the Emperor Philip.⁴ Death and destruction, in each prefigured shape, overran the Roman earth: wars, internal and external, decimated her legions: famine and pestilence swept away her already failing populations, and, as we have mentioned, the wild beasts of the forest had in many instances reoccupied rich tracts of now desolated country, which the ruined owners had been obliged to abandon in despair. And here, for a moment, we may pause in the contemplation of the scenes which have been hastily presented to our view. The *Roman Commonwealth*, for she still retained that great democratic title, triumphant abroad,

¹ Rev. vi. 7.

² Literally *livid*, or the hue of incipient mortification.

³ *Sismondi*—*Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. i. 40, *et seq.*

⁴ *Elliott*, *Horæ Apocal.* i. 175.

peaceful at home, had been sapped by internal tumults and sanguinary struggles, which in their turn had produced oppressive taxation and grinding poverty, sure preludes of the death and Hades which now swallowed up her military glories.

We have seen elsewhere,¹ in broader outline than is here represented, how desperately, yet with what consummate subtlety, Satan exerted his diabolic energies to maintain the predominance of the last kingdom of his usurpation, and to postpone the hour of its final restoration to the rightful king; but in the visions now under our consideration, it pleased the Divine Spirit more fully to explain to His waiting Church that for a long period of time, ere she can be a Church triumphant, she must undergo the hardships and struggles incident to a state of earthly warfare; and that although not *of* the world, yet inasmuch as her strife would be *in* the world, and with the God of the world; she must note well the events that were from age to age passing around her, and, from their successive occurrences, behold the perpetual fulfilment of the ancient promises, and from each stand-point learn her own relative position; and thus from age to age look up and take courage in the constantly recurring assurance that her deliverance would come at last. Her faith, her hope, her love, would all be tried, but she was receiving perpetual encouragement to endure unto the end. The wheat and the tares must grow together, but they would finally be separated. But the Church must herself beware, for while the Roman world was gradually degenerating from peace to the sword, and thence to privation and famine, and their dread sequents, death and national annihilation, she was herself more and more becoming secularised; and, while leavening the whole lump of heathendom, she was in turn imperceptibly imbibing much of the Satanic poison which would at length render the line of demarcation between the Christian and the idolater almost indistinguishable.

At the close of the vision, after the opening of the

¹ Prophetic Outlines—The Four Kingdoms, p. 41, &c.

fourth seal, this danger was looming at no great distance over the professing Christian Church. Though not yet triumphant, she had become a strong antagonist to the powers that then swayed the world, and in that strength lay the seeds of her worldly weakness, and plentiful has been the harvest of tares which have sprung up and ripened in that field, and which now only await the sharp sickle of the Reaper.

VI.

FIFTH AND SIXTH SEALS.

THE first four seals relate, as has been observed, almost exclusively to the temporal affairs of the Roman empire; but the Church of Christ had been struggling with the Prince of this world, and the confederate powers of darkness, during the entire period of their successive openings; and she had even then undergone multiplied sufferings and persecutions for the testimony of Jesus; yet these, so far as they were occasioned by Pagan opposition, were approaching their climax before other changes should occur in the councils of Providence; and, therefore, the fifth seal opens with a new phase of scenery. This is the vision revealed to the apocalyptic seer.

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be *fulfilled*.”¹

¹ Rev. vi. 9.

Thus the revealing angel draws the mind of the apostle from the merely secular view of the great empire of the world, to the contemplation of that gospel kingdom whose principles as a grain of mustard seed, sown well-nigh three centuries before the period to which this seal refers, had already grown into a goodly tree; and whose future was to be minutely interwoven with, and finally predominant over, all the governments upon earth. That grain, sown in weakness, had for generations been rising in its power, but its growth was to be watered, the foundations of the kingdom which it symbolised were to be cemented by the blood of the most faithful servants of the great Sower.

Thus had it been from the time of the crucifixion of our Lord until that now indicated.

Thus, in truth, may we say it had been even from the days when the blood of righteous Abel cried from the ground unto the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world; many had had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings—of bonds and imprisonment; many had been stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword; they had wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins—destitute, afflicted, tormented;¹ and well might the souls of the martyred ones be seen in the symbolic vision beneath the altar of sacrifice, awaiting with a divine impatience the time when He who was holy and true would judge and avenge their blood upon them that dwelt upon the earth.

But that time of retribution and restoration of all things would not yet arrive, and just at this period was to arise the fiercest struggle between the Prince of the powers of the air, and the servants of the living God; the one for the preservation of his long usurped, yet apparently declining dominion; the other for the recovery of the inheritance of which they had been so long defrauded. The legions of the noble army of martyrs had not yet been completed, but there was a crisis approaching in which the earthly brethren of the

¹ Heb. xi.

souls under the altar would experience the same fiery ordeal through which the latter had triumphantly passed.

Meanwhile, white robes were given to them; robes of justification, while still beneath the altar in the outer court, and their recorded names were to pass outward to the world as names of veterans of the same army who had already entered into their rest, and there awaited the arrival of their fellow-soldiers upon earth, who had yet to undergo like tribulations to those through which they had already passed. And the time of those fearful tribulations was by this seal foreshadowed. And again history fills up the outline which prophecy hath drawn, and in exact sequence to the other prefigured events. At this time raged the Diocletian persecution,¹ which commenced in the year 303, not being, as in former cases, a mere arbitrary outburst of personal tyranny, but the result of the deliberations of the imperial government, then no longer conducted by one head, but with divided councils, yet in this purpose strangely unanimous; that purpose being the utter extirpation of the Christian faith from the earth. And during this persecution, which was in the words of Elliott, the "longest, the most universal, and the fiercest that ever yet raged against the Christians,"² Churches were demolished, the Holy Scriptures were burnt, Church property was confiscated, the holders of religious assemblies were put to death, and Christians generally were placed out of the protection of the law, and were obliged to meet for their social services by stealth, in caves and catacombs, and other secret places.

And to this period, thus illustrative of the fifth seal, history has given the title of the "*Era of Martyrs*,"³ an

¹ Sismondi's *Fall of the Roman Empire*, i. 44. Dioclesian and his Colleagues.

² *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, vol. i. p. 186, third edit.

³ "The struggle between the fury of despotism and the heroism of conviction; between executioners and martyrs, is worthy of eternal remembrance. It endured with little interruption up to the union of the whole empire under Constantine."—Thus speaks *Sismondi—Fall of the Roman Empire*, i. 45.

era fearful in its apparent gloom and desolation, but in its issues brilliant and decisive for the advancing interests of Christianity.

In this darkened horizon thus opens the sixth seal of the prophetic scroll: "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind: and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places: and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"¹ The symbolisation is here strictly scriptural, and in accordance with the actual events which history unfolds to us. After the fearful persecution by Dioclesian and his colleagues, the Christian *superstition*,² in alike the eastern and the western portions of the empire, had been apparently crushed out, and orthodox Paganism had recovered its undivided sway. The picture exhibited to the contemplation of the aged apostle is the Roman empire, strong in its original idolatry; the Roman heavens peopled with their mythological deities; the Roman firmament shining, not with the spiritual light of the Divine presence, but glaring with the lurid lustre of its national luminaries; and while he beholds with holy sorrow the triumph of the powers of darkness; lo, earth through all her countless

¹ Rev. vi. 12.

² Thus Tacitus had spoken, at an earlier period, of Christianity, Ann. xv. 44: *Repressa in præsens exitiabilis superstitio rursus erumpebat, non modo per Judæam originem ejus mali, sed per urbem etiam, &c.*

multitudes begins to heave with unwonted excitement ; the thick atmosphere of Paganism becomes resplendent with a miraculous outburst of Christian light ; the sun, the moon, the stars, whether personified by the Olympian Divinities, or by the rulers of the lower world, become utterly eclipsed ; and all heathendom, panic-stricken, rushes to its darkest recesses for refuge from the bright and piercing beams, not unmixed with tokens of holy wrath, which issue from the face of Him that still sitteth in Divine Majesty upon His Father's throne. Then perished, like Pharaoh and his hosts, Maxentius¹ and his army in their flight across the Tiber ; then fell, some in battle, some by their own sacrilegious hands, some in the agonies and remorse of awful deathbeds, many of the chiefest of the Roman great ones ; and there were, amongst those great ones, some who, even in the supreme hour of their soul's despair, bewailed their just condemnation, that light had come into the world, and they had loved darkness rather than light ; and many besought, even with their dying expirations, the mercy of that Christ whom they had resisted and trampled under foot. And thus was the idolatrous system miraculously, though gradually, upheaved throughout the entire empire ; and, while the wondrous revolution was in progress, Constantine was raised up to complete the grand design of Providence ; and, finally, under him and his successors, paganism, as such, was entirely abolished, and the worship of the true God became the universal service.²

And now has rolled away, like a scroll, the entire firmament of paganism, under which the empire of Rome had been founded, and, from a mere horde of banditti, had grown to the enormous dimensions which she now occupied in the world ; but that empire still retained all her principles of vitality, and though the dominant powers of her heavens were about to give

¹ Sismondi—Fall of the Roman Empire, i. 76. *Horæ Apocalypticæ.*

² *Elliott fixes the opening of this seal at A.D. 311, and there-with nearly agrees Fleming.*

way to a new order of things, we shall see, amid the mild rays of the Christian faith, much also of the volcanic flame, which had often shed a darksome glare upon the superstitions of her most triumphant days. The Church of Christ, it is true, was now established, but with her establishment came the time of her first danger, the symptoms of which had begun long before to exhibit themselves, even in her days of weakness. There are, however, here some supplemental representations to be exhibited to the seer, to explain to him more fully the relative state of the world and of the Church, at the period at which the series of visions has now arrived. The chapter¹ which succeeds that in which the foregoing series have been recorded, requires careful consideration before we proceed to the opening of the seventh seal; the mind will not be prepared for the reception of the ensuing revelations until it shall have in some degree comprehended the events here unfolded.

At the period of Roman history at which we have now arrived, hordes of barbarians were from all quarters threatening the integrity of the empire, and, in truth, they would shortly desolate the entire Roman earth; but, meanwhile, the Church of Christ must be consolidated and promulgated, and for this purpose the heavenly messengers were directed to restrain the tempestuous inroads from every foreign quarter until, to adopt the language of the mighty angel from the east, having the seal of the Living God, "we shall have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Paganism, it is true, had been well-nigh cast out, and the world had adopted the worship of the Crucified One; the veil of the temple, long since rent in twain, had indicated the destruction of the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile; all were now members of the Israel of God; but the mere profession of Christianity and the reception of its vital principles into the heart were separate and distinct, and the spiritual enemies of the Church were not slow in availing them-

¹ Rev. vii.

selves of the insidious stratagems by which our Saviour had foretold that the growth of the good seed would be choked and interrupted. Many had indeed now been called, and many had outwardly accepted the call; but of the many then called few could be chosen. With the spread of Christianity, though ostensibly a religious movement, there was yet mixed up an essentially political element, and to adopt the beautifully illustrative adaptation of scriptural language used by Mr. Elliott, "All were not Israel that were of Israel." In truth, the proportion of the faithful and true, to the nominal and professing Christians, would scarcely admit of comparison; but before the completion of the great revolution, alike spiritual and temporal, which was now in progress in the world, it was needful that the little flock should be selected and assured; and that like the seven thousands of Israel who had not bowed the knee unto Baal in the days of the prophet of old, so, in these days of resuscitated Christian Israel, a little flock should be marked out of every tribe and family, who had not only bent the knee to none but the Living God, but had indeed and in truth received His Holy Spirit into their hearts, and become His chosen by the election of grace. Thus early was developed the grand distinction between nominal and practical Christianity; the profession of the world, and the spiritual acceptance of the heart; but we need not further anticipate results which will become self-apparent in the prosecution of this inquiry.¹ And yet the eye of the seer is directed to a more extended view, even into the depths of a far futurity; the chosen few had been sealed; the Church of Christ had been established; and through a period of external persecution, and much internal apostasy, paganism had been actually abolished; the restraining angels had released from their leashes the hordes of barbarians, that from north, and east, and west, and south, were waiting to desolate the prophetic world, and in the accomplishment of the great and successive

¹ *In an exhaustive argument Elliott explains and illustrates this portion of the seal most fully and satisfactorily.*

destructions which those floods of hostile immigration brought upon the devoted empire, the retiring waves carried back with them into the great outer ocean of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, a vast mixture of the pure streams of grace which had overflowed the land; and though they had come out of great tribulation, yet a multitude which no man could number now "stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," no longer a desolate and a persecuted flock, but washed in the blood of the Redeemer, and triumphant in the victory which He had won for them; and thus, in supplemental vision, was foreshadowed, first the little struggling company, the symbolic sealed ones of the Christian Israel, now finally established, and then the great continuous expansion of the faith, which another apostle has designated, in its final completeness, "the fulness of the Gentiles."¹ Each set time came, and was fulfilled in its turn; and, as St. Paul had said of the Jew and the Gentile before, the like scene was represented to the mental eye of St. John, and the dispersion and desolation of Rome imperial became a leading cause in the expansion of universal Christianity, that thus finally all Israel, alike Jewish and Gentile, should be saved.

VII.

SEVENTH SEAL—THE GOLDEN ALTAR—FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS.

WE have mentioned before that at the close of the first four seals Christianity had acquired such strength and stability as to have shaken to its foundations the ancient pagan orthodoxy, and to have acquired an independent position in the world. The next two seals, as successively opened, disclose the increasing struggle, alike

¹ Rom. xi. 25.

temporal and spiritual, between the powers of darkness and of light; between the hosts of Satan and the servants of the living God, until finally the power of truth prevailed, and apparently the contest was terminated, and the tribulation over, in the discomfiture of the infernal legions; apparently only, for though indeed truth had triumphed, yet he who was a liar from the beginning, and had held the world so long in thralldom by his cunningly-devised fables, was even now planning new contrivances still further to deceive his victims, and yet longer to maintain an unequal contest with Him whose certain triumph would be Satan's own sure destruction. And thus are the visions continued—"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne; and the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth; and there were voices and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."¹ Silence in heaven. No longer, as during the first four seals, do we hear the summons, "Come and see." No longer do we hear the expostulatory prayer of the souls beneath the altar; nor the despairing cries of the mighty men of the earth. There was silence in heaven—silence brief but awful. Was it the hush of expectation—the expectation of celestial intelligences awaiting, in mute ecstasy, the new unfoldings of the wondrous plans of Deity; the solemn and fearful, and yet joyous things that were coming upon the earth?

And while that silence lasts, behold the seven trumpets are delivered to the seven sounding angels, who

¹ Rev. viii.

prepare themselves to sound so soon as the angel at the golden altar shall have completed his devotional services upon it. And, transferred from the heavenly vision to earth's reality, we find the tempests of the barbarous surrounding nations, which had already begun to rage on the confines of the empire, and in many instances to overpass its barriers, and break into the interior, suddenly, and, as it were, by the hand of a superior power, stayed in their impetuous career; and towards the close of the reign of Theodosius,¹ about A.D. 395, the Goths, partly conciliated, submitted to him; the Persians, though before flushed with victory, sued for peace; and between the storms which had rent the empire, and those which threatened again shortly to convulse it, the reign of that monarch closed tranquilly, like the period of expectant stillness, which marks the solemn lull between the outbursts of a tempest.

But yet, ere the seven angels should begin to sound their trumpets, the angel ministering with his censer beside the golden altar, must complete his temple service; and in the explanation of this solemn portion of the scene, we cannot again accept a safer guide than Mr. Elliott, whose masterly exposition almost compels the assent of the less learned, though no less earnest inquirer. This angel having the golden censer, the expositor² whom we have cited conceives to have been the Lord Jesus, in His mediatorial character of our great High Priest, receiving and presenting the prayers of His people, the sealed ones, or all the saints; and with those prayers also ascended from earth much incense, the prayers of the vast body of professing Christians amongst whom, as has been before suggested, had arisen errors and heresies, worship of martyrs, reverence of relics, and many other characteristics inherited from ancient paganism, which, like early tares in the Christian field, must grow together until the great harvest. And the smoke of that incense,

¹ *Horæ Apocal.* i. 300, *et seq.*, third edit.

² *Ibid.* i. 301.

unlike the pure adoration of the saints, though it ascended up before God, yet showed that some unholy fuel had been mixed with the altar fire on earth, and therefore was unproductive of the celestial blessing. Therefore the unhallowed incense was rejected from the golden altar, and cast back upon the earth; and thereupon there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.¹ And all this takes place while the trumpet angels are standing before God, ready to sound. And what were the voices, and the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the earthquake which then took place? The half hour's silence in heaven, with its corresponding temporary lull upon earth, had passed away; Theodosius had died in peace in 395, and forthwith ensued, as introductory to the trumpet soundings, the voices of preparation of the barbarian nations, and the thunderings and lightnings of invading armies, and an earthquake of the Roman empire, for she was shaken to her very centre; nor must we omit to notice that in reality the time had been marked with strange convulsions of nature, and earthquakes, and elemental storms and tempests, such as to cause general forebodings of evil being at hand.² And thus commences the second septenary—"And the first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth,

¹ I confess that it has been a matter of some doubt with me whether the angel with the golden censer really typified the second person in the Holy Trinity, or some merely representative symbolic being; because in the character of the Lamb He is performing the great office of opening the seven seals; and this double personification seemed to me to interfere with the unity of the Apocalyptic scene; but when we reflect upon the mediatorial character of the Redeemer, and that even on His heavenly throne He is ever, like the High Priest of the Levitical dispensation, making intercession for the people, I feel satisfied that this must be the right explanation as to the person typified by this great angel. I may also observe that He does not appear as this High Priest Angel, until as the Lamb He has completed that which He *undertook*, the opening of the seven seals. In the last character *he no more presents Himself* to the beloved disciple.

² *Horæ Apocal. i. 350*, third edit., and citations in the notes.

and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."¹

Perhaps nothing can more strongly indicate the fulfilment upon earth of the celestial type just quoted, than the great northern inrush from beyond the Danube² of Alaric and his Gothic chieftains, with other hordes even from the distant Baltic, who, long restrained, now overran with fire and sword the richest districts of the European portion of the empire—until, finally, in 410, the city of Rome herself, having endured two preceding sieges, yielded to the Gothic invader; and thus came the first woe upon the now acknowledged Christian world; but it was to affect a third part only of the professing earth, for at the end of a few months Alaric fell ill, and died, in the full career of victory, and full of the projected conquest of Sicily and Africa."³ And this was the effect of the first trumpet blast.

"And the second angel sounded, and, as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."⁴

To the Vandal Genseric⁵ was allotted the conquest of the maritime provinces of Africa and the islands—all, in short, that belonged to the Western empire in the Mediterranean, and which "Alaric was prevented

¹ Rev. viii. 7.

² That is to say, beyond the borders of the prophetic world.

³ I do not know that it much affects the prophetic exposition of the first trumpet sounding, further than as an indication of the worldly estimate set upon the great leader of the day, that Alaric was buried in the bed of the River Bisentium, which flows beneath the walls of Cozenza; and that the captives who had been employed to dig his grave, to turn the course of the river, and afterwards to lead it to its former bed, were all massacred, that none might be able to reveal the spot where reposed the body of the conqueror of Rome.—(Sismondi—Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. i. 139.) The last Italian blood, says Elliott (*Horæ Apocal.* i. 353), that mingled with the fire and the hail, under the judgments of the first trumpet.

⁴ Rev. viii. 8.

⁵ *Horæ Apocal.* i. 353.

attempting by death:" Genseric¹ landed upon the shores of Africa in May 429 with about 50,000 men, less as a conqueror wishing to subdue a rich kingdom than as a ravager bent on destruction; and, adds the historian, "the loss of Africa was perhaps one of the greatest calamities which could have overtaken the Western empire;" but still its ships, and the insular provinces of Sicily and Sardinia remained; but these were finally reduced by the fleet of Genseric, who, not content with having conquered and devastated Africa, made every effort to give a new direction to the rapacity of his subjects, by accustoming them to maritime warfare, or, more properly speaking, piracy. Sailing from the port of Carthage, he ravaged Sicily, Sardinia, and the Western Islands; and twice did he utterly destroy the Roman navies collected in the Mediterranean for the purpose of opposing his destructive progress. The ancient capital of the world was in 455 pillaged by the Vandals with a degree of rapacity to which Alaric and the Goths had made no approach. The ships of the pirates were moored along the quays of the Tiber, and were loaded with a booty which it would have been impossible for the soldiers to carry off by land; nor must we omit to note that, as occurred in the case of the first trumpet, the convulsions of nature seemed also to accord with the foreshadowed woes.² Ere the sounding of the trumpet had ceased, terrible volcanic eruptions had desolated the districts of Auvergne and Dauphiné.

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood; and the third part of the water became wormwood, and many men died of the waters, because they were bitter."³ Let us remember that the northern frontier of the Roman empire was, with a slight interval, between the fountains of the rivers Rhine and Danube: "The

¹ Sismondi—*Fall of the Roman Empire*, i. 154.

² Elliott—*Horæ Apocal.* i. 354.

³ Rev. viii. 10.

scourge of God," Attila, king of the Huns,¹ had united under his barbarian sway the two mighty kingdoms of Germany and Scythia, and in 450 he moved in his victorious course—a bitter course of ravage and destruction—against the provinces of the Western empire. He crossed the Rhine at Basle, and thence made its opposite banks one extended scene of woe and desolation, until he arrived at another destined point of ravage—the European fountains of waters in the Alpine heights and valleys of Italy. "All was flight, depopulation, slaughter, slavery, and despair;"² and as Sismondi tells us, though with an expression of incredulity, "One hundred and sixty-two thousand men lay dead upon one field of battle in the western portion of the empire."³ Short and meteoric, as a shooting star, were the incursions of Attila upon the Roman provinces; and bitter as wormwood were the sufferings which he inflicted upon the fated inhabitants of the frontier rivers, and the dwellers amongst their fountainheads; but suddenly that star blazed up, and was extinguished; e'en as the result of the trumpet sounding abruptly terminated. He who had been deemed something greater than human suddenly yielded to the inexorable lot of man; he died suddenly, A.D. 453, in Dacia, during the intoxication of a banquet.⁴ His empire fell with him, and thus this lurid meteor became extinct; the third part of the rivers, and of the fountains of waters had been cut off, and the waters themselves had verily become wormwood. And the sounding of the third trumpet was completed.

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst

¹ Horæ Apocal. i. 356.

² Ibid. i. 357.

³ Fall of Rome, i. 162.

⁴ Sismondi—Fall of the Roman Empire, i. 164.

of heaven, saying, with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound."¹ And thus three woes have come and passed away; woes, the natural consequences of the errors and corruptions which had accompanied the development of the Christian dispensation; and had made it,—alas! that we must say so,—little better than a system of philosophic ethics, and of Christianised paganism. Rome was verging to her dissolution, as an integral and undivided power.

Desolated, landward, by Alaric, and the hail, and fire, and sword of his Gothic hosts; ravaged, in her sea-board and islands, by the ruthless Genseric, who flung himself in the full flush of his victorious career like a burning mountain upon her maritime provinces; and yet, further restricted and distressed by the bitter scourgings of Attila, the wormwood star, the final break-up of alike the eastern and the western portion of the empire was evidently impending.

But as if to mark yet more fully the period of the blast of the fourth trumpet, and its consequent woe upon the prophetic earth, we find² in the year 476,² that Odoacer, chief of the Heruli, a remnant of the host of Attila, left on the Alpine frontiers of Italy, compelled the senate of Rome to send away the imperial insignia to Zeno, emperor of Constantinople, declaring that one ruler was sufficient to govern the whole empire. Thus was at that time the European third part of the imperial sun smitten with the attendant luminaries; and faint was the light which glimmered from beneath that great western eclipse. But bitter as were these woes, three yet more bitter impended over the vast power which yet presided over the civilised world; and the solemn voice of the angel flying through mid-heaven prepares the seer for more awful events than he has yet witnessed.

¹ *Rev. viii. 12.*

² *Fall of the Roman Empire, i. 171. Horæ Apocal. i. 359.*

VIII.

FIFTH AND SIXTH TRUMPETS.

“AND the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth : and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit ; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace ; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth : and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree ; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months : and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it ; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle ; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron ; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails : and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. One woe is past ; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.”¹

I apprehend that there can now be no reasonable doubt

¹ Rev. ix. 1-12.

that the star fallen from heaven unto the earth prefigured the great impostor Mohammed ;¹ it is true that this has been a point of much discussion, and that various interpretations have been given of this portion of the apocalyptic imagery ; but we must remember that the seer had at the moment before him a prophetic picture of "things which must be thereafter," in their relation to the Roman earth, and the Church of God ; and as in the foregoing running notes upon the scenes successively revealed, we have beheld one portion² of that earth eclipsed and desolated, yet not utterly destroyed ; and the prime agents in those desolations have been represented by stars, and burning mountains, and other phenomena of nature ; so we see in this picture, but in another district of the dissolving empire, another star, not merely passing like a fearful though brilliant meteor, over the affrighted peoples, but some time since cast down from its celestial place into the earth, yet still retaining a sufficient share of its latent heat to throw a long and lurid glare over the prophetic world.

And well was this great smoke exemplified in the dark teaching of the Arabian prophet.³ Originally, a star of the first magnitude, a prince, and not only a

¹ I adopt the explanation of this trumpet sounding as given by Mr. Elliott, because I am fully convinced that in the main his view is correct. Whether it may not admit of a more extended application, and refer to the pestilential smoke which at this period arose out of the bottomless pit, and in the east darkened the sun and the air as the Mohammedan delusion, while it overspread the west, as the Papal apostasy, I will not venture to affirm ; but I confess that my mind greatly leans towards the more extensive solution of the subject. And in passing it may be noticed that the effects of this trumpet are not restricted as in former soundings to a part only of the Roman earth, but that they have a general application. Still, it must be remembered, that while Mohammedanism arose suddenly as smoke from a newly-lighted furnace, the cloud of the Papal apostasy had been long gathering in the west, although at this time it enveloped the nations in darkness, thick as that which overspread Egypt of old.—See Fleming on this trumpet.

² Evidently the western third part.

³ Elliot—*Horæ Apocal.* i. 419, *et seq.*

prince, but a priest, amongst his people, the hereditary head of the ancestral line of Mohammed, had shone brightly in the eastern firmament. The genealogy was ancient and undisputed—descendants of the patriarch Abraham, the twelve sons of Ishmael were heads of twelve tribes, whose names are still traceable in the Arabian peninsula. Of these the chief were Nabatheans and Kedarites, the latter being the acknowledged progenitors of the family of the Koreish, of which Mohammed was a member. The tribe of Koreish had acquired the keys of the Caaba, where was deposited the black stone which had fallen from heaven, and that which went with the keys, the principality of Mecca; and this partly temporal and partly sacerdotal office devolved through four lineal descents upon the grandfather of Mohammed, and was, in fact, in his hands at the time of the grandson's birth. But soon after this event the father of Mohammed, and subsequently his grandfather, died; and the governorship of Mecca, the headship of the tribe, and the keys of the Caaba, passed into the hands of another branch of the family, and thus was Mohammed, in truth, by birth, a star in the political heaven; yet, at the commencement of his wonderful career, a star fallen into the ground, hidden and well-nigh extinguished.¹ Arabia was sunk in deep idolatry, but Mohammed had become convinced of the unity of the Deity, and he earnestly desired to impress this truth upon his countrymen; his inspiration, however, was not from on high.² In the solitude of the cave of Hera he indulged his gloomy and mysterious imaginings; and in that cave, during his communings with the demon power, whose promptings first drove him thither, he received the key, more powerful than that which his ancestors had swayed in Mecca, with which he indeed opened that bottomless pit, whence arose the baleful smoke which overwhelmed the east-

¹ Outlines of History in Lardner's *Cab. Cycl.* 169.

² The reader of *Prophetic Outlines* (Four Kingdoms, p. 32) will remember that, under the Third Kingdom, we have identified Mohammed as the little horn of the Grecian goat.

ern portion of the empire ; and though after the lapse of more than twelve hundred years still hangs like a deadly vapour over a large portion of the ancient world ; and numerous as the locust clouds, which theretofore the east winds brought from Arabia, to the destruction of the best provinces of Egypt ; and poisonous and tormenting as their native scorpions, the warlike tribes of the desert, issued forth under the prophet's guidance, from the Arabian peninsula, to plague the nations which had deserted and forgotten the living Lord. And they came with the swiftness of the trained Arab horse, and fierce as the lion of the desert ; brave, yet effeminate,¹ fearful executioners of the justice of offended Heaven. In the year 622 did Mohammed, escaping from his cave, issue forth upon his permitted career of conquest and of conversion ; the sword of war being, to use his own language, the key of heaven and of hell ; and in each way he used that instrument successfully,² and thus commenced the prefigured woe of the fifth trumpet. Thus from Arabia issued forth that murky cloud, which in its destructive development, as the Saracenic power, carried desolation not only through the eastern division of the empire, but even into the best portions of the west. But there was a time appointed for the limitation of the progress of this power, and of its exercise. Five months³ were they permitted, or rather directed, under the inspiring agency of the angel of destruction, to exercise the height of their oppression, and their own commanders had forbidden them to destroy⁴ the palm-trees, or burn the standing corn, or cut down fruit-bearing trees ; to do damage to the herds and flocks, or to kill any beasts, but such as were necessary for their sustenance ; and strictly was that portion of their com-

¹ This burning passion, says Sismondi, of the Arabian temperament.—Fall of the Roman Empire, i. 294.

² It is worthy of observation that Mohammed in the one case, and the Pope in the other, each assumed to an extent to which I can here only thus briefly refer, the *power of the keys*.

³ Or 150 years of 30 years, or days each.

⁴ Sismondi—Fall of Rome, ii. 8.

mission fulfilled. In 612¹ Mohammed first publicly announced his prophetic mission, and thus caused the smoke of the pit of darkness to rise up; then ensued the aggressive religious wars of himself and his successors, during which Syria and Egypt fell early before them; Africa was subjugated; Spain was subdued; and the south and centre of France almost to the Loire were reduced beneath the power of the then waxing Crescent. Charles Martel² checked them at Poitiers in 732, about the beginning of the fifth prophetic month, but their time was not yet ended, and they returned with new violence to their devastations until about 755,³ when the son of the last named monarch expelled them from France beyond the Pyrenees; and about 762 the Christian remnant in Spain began to drive back the tide of war upon their Saracenic oppressors; while in the East the reigning Emperor Constantine Copronymus, about the same period, stayed the incursions of the Saracens in that quarter also; and thus for one hundred and fifty years, or five prophetic months, continued the intensity of the Saracenic woe, the first result of the pestilential fumes from the bottomless pit.

But this vast power began to fail from its own enormous and unwieldy bulk, and after no very long interval, we find those once mighty Khalifs, by slow degrees, retiring into the province of Bagdad, where they fell into weakness and incapacity; they hastened indeed their own downfall⁴ by an error like that of Rome in her early decadence, in introducing the overwhelming military element by the formation of a body-guard raised from the martial hordes of Turks dwelling at the foot of the Caucasus; and of these prætorians there were about the year 841⁵ fifty thousand in the province and neighbourhood of Bagdad, on the Tigris,

¹ Elliott, i. 433.

² Outlines of History in Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia, 182.

³ Elliott—Horæ Apocal.

⁴ Outlines of History, Cab. Cycl. 214.

⁵ Sismondi—Fall of the Roman Empire, ii. 203.

and on the other side of the Euphrates ; and these were the foregoing symptoms of the next coming woe. Thus sounded the fifth trumpet ; long was its blast, and fearful were its woes, not only in the portion of the empire where the furnace smoke first burst forth, but as we have seen in the whole prophetic earth ; nor must we lose sight of the dark pall which the Spirit of Evil had been gradually spreading over the decaying Christianity of the western empire. But further woes were yet imminent, and the Divine Interpreter thus prepares the mind of the seer for the next Revelation : "One woe is past ; and behold there come two woes more hereafter."¹ And thereupon "the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand ; and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire and of jacinth and brimstone : and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions ; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these there was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails : for their tails are like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood : which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk : neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." The billows of the Saracenic flood had indeed

¹ Rev. ix. 12.

ebbed, but the advancing tide of a new overwhelming woe was again flowing, and from the same stormy and unfathomed deep it took its origin. A voice from heaven itself loosed the restraints which had held back the destroying powers upon the Euphrates, where Christ and Christianity had already given place to Alla and his prophet, and from Bagdad,¹ by the Euphrates, in the year 1057, went forth the Moslem Power under its new Turkman head, on the career of victory and aggrandisement thenceforth afresh destined for it. Myriads of myriads were the numbers of the horsemen; long had they been held back upon or near the region of the Euphrates; and now were they about to be loosed from their restraint, and to go forth upon the infliction of another woe; and that woe, like its predecessor, was to fall most heavily upon the eastern portion of the empire. For a week, and a day, and a month, and a year, did the Turkish host proceed from the date of their departure, 18th January, 1057, on their long and protracted march of conquest and destruction in the East, until their destined labour was accomplished in the fall of Constantinople, 29th May, 1453, completing the prophetic period,² and then, to adopt the language of Mr. Elliott, "the artillery of the Othmans thundered irresistibly against Constantinople; and the breach was stormed; and the city fell; and amidst the shouts of the conquering Turkmans from the Euphrates, and the dying groans of the last Constantine, the third of the men were slain, the Greek empire was no more."³ But the sounding of this trumpet of woe did not cease with the destruction of the eastern third of Roman Christendom, by the armies bearing onward

¹ Elliott, i. 495.

² Between the two dates referred to in the text is an interval of 396 years and 130 days, which Mr. Elliott, computing (l. 493) by the Julian Calendar, brings within a few days of actual agreement with the prophetic period of 396 years and 106 days; and he explains this slight variance by showing that the prophetic time ended about the middle of the siege.

³ This was one of the earliest instances of the use of artillery in warfare.

with them from the Euphrates the false religion which had originally issued from the pit opened by the falling star;¹ the pestilential emanations from that gulf ceased not to arise, and, like a pall of blackness, had overspread the whole prophetic earth, and the deep night of ignorance closed over almost the whole of the civilised world. Satan had apparently succeeded in his grand plan of corrupting the purity of Christianity; and the faith once delivered to the saints had well-nigh lapsed into worse than the paganism which it had in name supplanted. With ignorance came superstition with her whip of scorpions; and the universal history of that time which common consent has designated the *dark ages*, will but show that corruption of all kinds had tainted the whole of Christendom, if indeed that name can be applied to any age whose rulers are handed down to us as stained with every sin which society abhors, and religion cannot tolerate. Then the worship of demons, or departed spirits, of idols, or statues, and relics; then fornications, or forbidding to marry; and sacrilegious thefts, or indulgences and penances, and all the doctrines of purgatory, had utterly supplanted the purity and simplicity of gospel truth; and Christendom herself had ceased to understand the very Christianity which she professed. Touching most lightly, and with the deepest reverence, upon the great developments of the Book of Revelation, and retaining my original intention of sketching a mere outline of a vast subject, suggestive to the reader of further inquiries, I had intended to have restricted my observations upon the sixth trumpet to this limit, and to have passed by the visions related in the tenth and the greater portion of the eleventh chapter of the Apocalypse, as unnecessary to our present inquiry; but Scripture is so consistent with itself, that it is impossible to omit a link without weakening the connection of the entire chain. It is evident that the events evoked by the blast of the sixth trumpet are of a more stupendous character than *any* which had before occurred; and I may perhaps

¹ Horæ Apocal. ii. 3.

take this opportunity of mentioning that my impression as to the interpretation of the visions of the four kingdoms, on which I have elsewhere made some observations, and of the seals, the trumpets, and the vials here more particularly considered, is this, that the former related principally to the secular state of each successively arising worldly power;¹ while the latter show, upon a more extended yet parallel scale, the varying phases of Christianity itself, in its changing yet perpetual relation with, and influence upon, the things of that worldly power. Time would fail us to enter upon a discussion upon the subject, but I suspect that the zealous student will discover that the course of the fourth beast, terrible and strong exceedingly as he is, and the succession of the visions of the Christian Church, will be found to advance, always in a parallel, often in an identical direction, and to be perpetually explanatory the one of the other, according to the circumstances of their respective positions; and with this caution we will resume our outline. While the blast of the sixth trumpet is reverberating through heaven, a mighty angel² comes down clothed with a cloud, crowned with a rainbow, from head to foot bright, brilliant, and celestial. He bears the little book, and he stands upon earth and sea; and when he has cried with a voice, as when a lion roareth, seven thunders utter spontaneously their own voices over the earth; and the seer is about to record these intonations, when a voice from heaven itself stays his pen, and bids him write them not. And then the angel utters the solemn declaration that the time is not³ yet for the finishing of the mystery of God, which would take place during the sounding of the seventh or next trumpet. And again spake the voice from heaven; and bade the prophet take from the angel the little open book, which he ate

¹ Prophetic Outlines—The Four Kingdoms.

² Rev. x.

³ Χρόνος οὐκ ἔστι [or ἔσται, fut], ἔτι. Time is not [or shall not be] yet. Without presuming to *critical* knowledge, I suspect this to be more correct than our accepted translation, "there should be time no longer."

up, or read and digested, and of which the result was that his grace of prophecy was greatly increased, and its world-wide circulation assured. These symbols mark, unless my mind greatly misleads me, the vast power gained by the Papal influence immediately before the period of the Reformation;—a power that even aspired from earth to the heavenly places, and began to fulminate its bolts so loudly that the seer, while witnessing the wondrous revelation before him, had well-nigh mistaken the roll from the abyss murmuring on the earthly hills¹ for echoes of the celestial thunders; and, but for the voice from heaven directing him, would have recorded them as part of the inspiration from on high: “Write them not,” said the Spirit, for when the time should arrive that the mystery of God should be accomplished, it would plainly be seen that these were worldly reverberations from the not heavenly regions; but in the sounding of the next trumpet that set time would be for the manifestations of these things. It is, however, no part of this outline to enter upon the consideration of this subject, vitally interesting as it is.

It is clear that those muttered thunders were but the vain imitations of the divine reverberations, uttering their own voices² from the seven-hilled city of him who claimed to be vicar of Christ; in other words, the then well-known and dreaded thunders of the Vatican. There is evidently, at the time before the seer, a great prophetic promise of the increase of gospel knowledge among *the few*; while professing Christendom shall be *unchristian*, and the preachers or true witnesses while in sackcloth, despised and persecuted, yet exercising a wondrous spiritual power; and when slain, arising again, and ascending to heaven in a cloud; and this period was further marked by a series of spiritual manifestations which appear now to arrive at a peculiar culmination. Irrespective of the grand series of tableaux

¹ Vaticanum .
Montis imago.

—HORACE.

² Ταῖς ἑαυτῶν φωναίς.

which up to this time have been exhibited, showing the struggles and difficulties of early Christianity, the heresies which should divide it, the infidelities which should obscure it, and the almost utter darkness which should envelop its more advanced age, it was needful that the world should know that God never leaves Himself without witness. Rome, ere she had become Rome Papal, assumed to be the holy city; and far be it from me to say that, at one period of her professed Christianity, she had not a bright and shining band of Christians, not merely within her city walls, but within the vast limits of her city empire. It is this fact which I suspect the Spirit intended to indicate to St. John at this moment when he had just received an additional share of inspiration from the perusal and digestion of the little open book,¹ that during the whole of this long period He had nevertheless not left Himself at any moment without witness, and that with all the intrigues of Satan around, in troubles, in persecutions, in death itself, there arose perpetually a protesting few, a noble army of martyrs, asserting their faith, and sealing that faith with their blood whenever that testimony should be required. And now we are brought into collision with a dread being whose existence we have before seen, but whose presence and operation serves to mark the time at which we have arrived; and this, so far as historical analogies have allowed us to form a conclusion, appears to point unmistakably to the great era of the Reformation. The professing Church of Christ, of which it may be no strained expression to say that the city of Rome had been amongst her early nursing mothers, had for centuries been gradually falling off

¹ I am aware that there has been much controversy about the little book. I do not presume to settle the question, but it seems to me that it may probably mean, that when in reality the times prefigured in the foregoing pictures shall have arrived in the world, the whole practical view of the past, compared with its foreshadowings, shall have become so full and perfect that he who ran might read, and from them perceive plainly the general course of the events of Christendom, now become comparatively brief, until the final consummation of the mystery of God.

from her first love, and had become more and more secular and selfish. He who had long before sent his own priestess to her fane had corrupted her to the core, and the spiritual temple of the living God had become, as it was once before, a den of thieves. The wild beast from the abyss,¹ himself the representative and the counterpart of Satan, the God of the world, seeing his own throne in danger, had been forced to come forward in support of the ancient usurpation, and for the first time in these prophetic pictures we behold the power of Satan, and the protesting spirit of the gospel in direct personal antagonism. Of course, the worldly power on earth prevails, and the witnesses are slain and exposed to the vulgar gaze ; but soon the voice from heaven restores them to life, and another invitation from the holy place bids them "come up hither ;" and thus in the presence of the angels of God, of admiring men and of despairing demons, they are carried upward to heaven in a cloud ; the doctrines of Christianity are promulgated in their purity and their simplicity through the world ; but these protests and these struggles must be marked with sorrows ; two woes, it is true, have passed, and another cometh yet, and still the world's power struggling for existence, and the little flock of Christ wage a long struggle of infliction and endurance. And thus we mark the early period of the blessed Reformation, an event,² or rather series of events, the culmination of which we may perhaps fairly fix in the latter half of the sixteenth century.

¹ I confess I had at first some difficulty in reconciling the descriptions of the beast rising out of the bottomless pit and him rising up out of the sea ; and I had half imagined that the former should be more correctly identified with the beast coming up out of the earth ; but I am satisfied that Mr. Elliott is correct in his identification of them. The abyss of the sea is not an unusual expression.

² Luther died in February, 1547.

IX.

SEVENTH TRUMPET.

TRULY God moves in a mysterious way. He suffers Satan to assume the apparent characteristics of an angel of light, but it is only that the brightness of the celestial glory may be the more vividly displayed. The earthly thunders sounding from the seven-hilled city were not to be promulgated as the true sayings of God, and loud as had been their utterances, yet they were to be sealed, and not written; the mind of the seer had, however, been prepared by the supplemental revelations of the sixth trumpet for a vast change in the divine order of events; it had become more filled with spiritual understanding; the mystery of *iniquity* was beginning to be cleared up; the first beams of the Reformation had begun to dawn just when the depth of that iniquity was darkest and most gloomy; and, as had been just announced to John, the time was now rapidly approaching when, not indeed the mystery of *iniquity*, for that would keep seething on until the Parent of iniquity should himself be restrained; but the mystery of *God* should be finished, as He had long since declared unto His servants the prophets. We must not, however, anticipate the events which were now rushing to their accomplishment. The persistent love of darkness rather than light still prevailed, and therefore the human mind had more and more shrunk from the beams of truth, until in the era at which we have arrived, it would have been difficult to find many who, in answer to the question, What is truth? could have answered in the words of the only-begotten Son to the Father, "Thy Word is truth,"—and even could they have gone so far, they would have found that Word so overlaid with man's traditions, and Satan's superstitions, that they could with difficulty have recognised the pearl of great price which it contained. The second woe,

grievous as it was, and long as it had afflicted Christendom, had barely passed away, and lo, a third and worse woe was quickly rushing on. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.¹ And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations² were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them that destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." Here, and in the following three chapters,³ which supplement and explain the foregoing prophetic history, we have, as I believe, the entire solution of the mystery of God, spoken of before under the soundings of the sixth trumpet, which had now begun more perfectly to develop itself to human understanding. The blessed Reformation had become

¹ Rev. xi. 15.

² *Τὰ ἔθνη*—the Gentiles.

³ Rev. xii., xiii., xiv.—I have referred in the first series of "Prophetic Outlines" to the general characteristics of the sun-clothed woman of the twelfth chapter, and her persecution by the dragon (Four Kingdoms, p. 48); and to the two beasts of the thirteenth chapter, the former of which I have recognised as the fourth beast of Daniel. The fourteenth chapter appears to me to be further illustrative of the last blasts of the seventh trumpet, which continued to sound during the outpouring of the seven vials; and consequently, that portion of the chapter synchronising with the sixth and seventh seals, seems to be still unfulfilled. The treading of the wine-press of the wrath of God (xiv. 20), and the remembrance of great Babylon, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath (xvi. 19), appear to be identical in time, and probably in place also.

an established fact ; the dark clouds of ignorance and heathenism which Satan had been permitted again to cast over the pure light which had shone into the redeemed world had been once more removed ; but the struggle between light and darkness must go on until the end ; yet, for the encouragement of his fainting servants, a vast amount of truth and grace was about to be poured out upon the Church ; the spirit of the preacher and the missionary was about to be revived, and although it would be a time of ever accumulated woes, yet He who had told His disciples that He would be with them alway, even unto the end of the world, would be upon their side, for indeed it was needful that as their day was, so should their strength be—a strength which He alone could impart, and which He had promised never to withhold. And blessed, in this point of view, would be the days which were approaching ; the buds of the tree of human learning had two centuries since burst forth from the lethargy of the long winter of ignorance ; those bursting buds had expanded into flower, and were even then ripening into fruit ; and well did the heavenly voices render the sad yet joyous, wailing yet triumphant notes. A time of rejoicing was it, for the mystery of God was accomplished ; His word and His will were no longer a sealed book in the hands of an apostate, because an ignorant, priesthood ; and to those who would accept it, it would become a savour of life unto life. True, indeed, it is that God often uses apparently human agency to carry out His great purposes, and He did so now. The printing press, at a period not long antecedent to the era which we are now considering, had begun to scatter abroad the seeds of classic knowledge, and with the revival of ancient secular learning, consequent upon that great invention, an extraordinary impulse had been given to the perusal of the Holy Scriptures ; and soon, not alone in the accepted version of the Romanist, which was still a sealed book to the unlearned, but even in his own native tongue, every man could read, and mark, and learn ; ay, and inwardly digest for himself the wonderful

works of God. This was the state of worldly affairs when the seventh angel sounded ; and well, therefore, as we have said, might there be voices of rejoicing in heaven, for it was the herald trumpet of the not distant approach of the Prince thus long waiting for the occupation of His inheritance. Yes, then, in truth, the temple of God was opened in heaven, and in it was seen the ark of His testimony—a testimony shortly to be revealed, even yet more fully.

This, of necessity, would be a time of woe and of struggle, and it would supervene rapidly upon the sorrows of the Reformation trumpet ; yea, indeed, it would be almost a continuation of them, so quickly would it arrive ; for the first time the signs of the end are distinctly shown ; and, indeed, there was a note of deep and solemn sadness in that blast, which sounded to the innermost recesses of the heart, preparing us for this result ; and if it spake of joy and gladness, yet there were intermixed tones of woe and sorrow which would no less rive that heart, and breathe anger into the breasts of kings, and rouse the fury of nations. And in the tumult of contending principles shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? and in the assertion of right, will not His wrath go forth ? Alas ! let us look to the struggles which desolated the European world ; struggles of revived *human* learning, and the scepticism and infidelity first born of unsanctified *human* knowledge ; struggles of intellect just beginning to assert her pre-eminence over material things ; struggles of material things themselves ; struggles of new and mutually repulsive principles introduced among mankind by the unwonted budding of that tree of knowledge, would that it had been sanctified by the fruit of the tree of life ; struggles of rival creeds expressed in the war-cries of nations ; struggles internal, even of the nations themselves, now strong as the unyielding iron of despotic power, now weak with the intermingled clay of democracy ; now furious with the new-born infidelity of the *day*, and not yet delivered from the thralldom of the *ancient superstitions* ; and thus went on the wailing

blast, until it burst forth into the fearful tocsin of the great French Revolution in 1789;¹ and still will its tones reverberate until a louder trumpet blown by a yet more mighty angel shall sound through the empyrean, and announce the complete fulfilment of the mystery of God. And then² is brought before the apostle's eye the retrospective history of the Church now entering upon her last trial, and soon about to be triumphant, of which we have had occasion elsewhere to speak; and her predestinated time is rapidly approaching when, from her appointed refuge in the wilderness, she shall come forth radiant and bright in all the beauty of her holiness; and during this lengthened time the fourth beast is still in existence,³ and running his baleful course under the malignant influence of the great red dragon, and mighty in the attributes which make him terrible and strong exceedingly, and mysterious in the mystic numbers which mark his name, and his proximate period of decadence. These things, however, we have briefly traced in our consideration of the four great kingdoms; but the explanatory series of visions is continued through fiery troubles into a state of blessedness at which I suspect this dispensation has neither symbolically or really hitherto arrived.⁴ But out of this last trumpet arise, as the complement of its solemn and woeful soundings, the seven vial-bearing angels of whom we must next speak.

¹ I do not think that I err in again following Mr. Elliott's explanation (*Horæ Apocalypticæ*, iii. 291, third edit.) If my thoughts lead me at all to differ from him, I should be perhaps inclined to fix the first blowing of the trumpet at a period rather prior to the expiration of the first half of the eighteenth century, and I almost suspect that it has not yet ceased to sound, and that it will continue to reverberate during the effusion of the vials, until the din and turmoil of universal anarchy shall be stayed by the sudden sound of the silver trumpet of the angel herald of the returning Messiah.

² Rev. xii.—See also *Prophetic Outlines—The Four Kingdoms*, &c., p. 48.

³ Rev. xiii.; xiv. 9, &c.

⁴ Rev. xiv.—As I have observed, a portion of the fourteenth chapter, in relation with the last two vials, awaits its final accomplishment, which may however take place at any moment.

X

FIRST SIX VIALS.

"THE nations were angry, and thy wrath is come,"¹ is the language of the four-and-twenty elders, as they worshipped at the first sounding of the seventh trumpet; and soon the seven angels having the seven last² plagues wherein was filled up the wrath of God, came out of the temple, and received from one of the four beasts the commission to execute their fearful office; and herein let us note that, not as heretofore,³ in other instances of woes from outward causes and foreign aggression, do these judgments come, but that they are wholly of internal origin, and that they are inflicted by angels specially commissioned through one of the chief of the beatified assembly in the heavenly presence, to go forth as the executioners of these final judgments upon the earth. And this consideration adds much to the awe and majesty of the fearful solemnity about to be enacted. The mystery of God had been already accomplished, the period of His long endurance of evil had come to an end, and the angel,⁴ flying through mid-heaven, bearing the everlasting gospel, had cautioned the nations to fear God, and to give glory to Him; and had proclaimed that the hour of His judgment was come; yet men heeded not the caution, nor obeyed the proclamation. As in the days of Noah, so it was then, so is it now, so will it be until the end. Meanwhile, the wailing note of the trumpet still sounding, those seven angels⁵ proceed on their fearful mission, and forthwith commence the last manifestations of the

¹ Rev. xi. 18.² Rev. xv. 1.³ Horæ Apocal. iii. 303, third edit.⁴ Rev. xiv. 6, 7.⁵ Rev. xiv.—I am aware that various dates have been assigned for the period of the commencement of these outpourings; some fix it at the era of the Reformation, and my own mind once leant towards that interpretation; but I am forced to confess, for many reasons which it is impossible to recapitulate in a note, that Mr.

wrath of the long-forbearing Godhead. Rapidly take place the successive effusions, and we must as rapidly review them ; they are not unlike the successive plagues of Egypt, and while they desolate the land, their moral results seem also to agree, for the inhabitants of the earth learn not wisdom, and Satan hardens the hearts of the Pharaohs of the age to the impending destruction.

And what was the commission of the first vial-bearing angel? " He poured out his vial on the earth,¹ and there broke out a noisome and evil ulcer on the men who had the mark of the beast, and on them who worshipped his image ;" and thus is brought at once before us the consideration of the great actors in the Apocalyptic drama ; the beast, still the great reigning secular power of the world, though, like his image-prototype, weakened by subdivisions, and uncongenial admixtures and associations, yet recognised by his mark or number,² and the image set up for his worship by his two-horned coadjutor, who has in his decadence made him yet more terrible and strong exceedingly. The infidelity and atheism which, during the latter portion of the eighteenth century culminated in the French Revolution, had been secretly germinating on the Continent of Europe, and had resulted in utter licentiousness, till then almost unknown. The moral sense of society had become vitiated, and a flood of impurity had inundated

Elliott's conclusions are too satisfactorily exhaustive to allow me to arrive at any other result than that which he has so fully, and, as I think, scripturally expounded.

¹ Rev. xvi. 2.

² The explanations of the hieroglyphic number of the beast are, I need not say, many and conflicting ; but I believe that which I referred to in the *Outlines of the Four Kingdoms*, p. 54, is the correct one ; at all events, it is the most ancient. I am writing partly from recollection, but I think the word *Λατρίνορ* was promulgated as the solution of the mystic number by Irenæus, in the early part of the third century ; he was a disciple of Polycarp, who had himself conversed with John and others who had seen the Lord (see Bickersteth's *Christian Fathers of the first and second centuries*, p. 105, edit. 1838.) If my citation of Irenæus be correct, I cannot help thinking that more authority is due to this interpretation than to many other ingenious guesses of learned moderns. I may also add that as the Latin or Roman kingdom

the civilised world ; and the miserable consequences of this utter abnegation of all principles of religion and virtue were spreading themselves abroad amongst mankind.¹ More noisome than the foulest ulcer that can afflict humanity ; more infectious than the plague in the height of its virulence ; its deadly and contagious influence had extended secretly yet surely from mind to mind, from soul to soul, until it burst out into the fearful pestilence which converted the Europe of the last century into a moral charnel-house of corruption. The plague botch² of Egypt had indeed broken out in wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores, and the history of the Reign of Terror (1792), its concomitants, and its antecedents, are the best commentary upon this poisonous effusion.³

was, at the time of this Father, in the apparent vigour of worldly exaltation, this mystery would be one of the first which would evolve themselves into clear and plain reality. The like number is contained in the words—

Η	.	.	.	8
Λ	.	.	.	30
α	.	.	.	1
τ	.	.	.	300
ι	.	.	.	10
ν	.	.	.	50
η	.	.	.	8
β	.	.	.	2
α	.	.	.	1
σ	.	.	.	200
ι	.	.	.	10
λ	.	.	.	30
ε	.	.	.	5
ι	.	.	.	10
α	.	.	.	1
<hr/> ΧΞΤ				<hr/> 666

Ἡ Λατίνη Βασιλεία, the Latin kingdom, with the more usual modern spelling (Horæ Apocal. iii. 201). The Book of Revelation being written in Greek, I think we must have recourse to that language for the explication of this emblem, and it must be admitted that the concurrent meaning of these explanations is very striking.

¹ Horæ Apocal. iii. 306.

² *Ibid.* 307. Deut. xxviii. 35.

³ We may venture to note that the effects of this plague boil

But the vials are poured out in rapid sequence: "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man, and every soul died in the sea."¹ We may here note the parallel judgment of the second trumpet; there is also a striking similarity with the Egyptian plague of blood² in the waters wherein the fish died; each worthy of careful comparison and consideration. Following a like course of interpretation to that already applied to the trumpet symbols, I conceive this vial to be typical of the dissolution of the maritime power, and commerce and colonies, of the countries of Papal Christendom, consequent upon, or rather accompanying the great revolutionary outbreak³ to which I have referred. During the war that ensued, and lasted for more than twenty years, the destruction of the European navies, and the loss of their colonies, was a conspicuous result of those gigantic struggles; and Dr. Keith has observed that the whole history of the world does not present such a period of naval war, destruction, and bloodshed.

"And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood; and I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus, for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy; even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments."⁴ Again we have a striking parallelism with the third trumpet; and in like manner the outpouring of

were less grievous in the Protestant states than in the Papal countries. All sinned, therefore all suffered; but the Protestant world had repudiated the idolatrous practices and lying traditions, the masses and the indulgences, which not only professed to forgive the past, but licensed future sins; and though they were grievously guilty, yet the poisonous particles of the vial fell with less corroding effect upon the kingdoms professing the reformed faith than those in secular union with, and acknowledged spiritual subjection to, the Papal See.

¹ Rev. xvi. 3.

² *Horæ Apocal.* iii. 327, *et seq.*

³ Exod. vii. 19.

⁴ Rev. xvi. 4.

this vial appears to be indicative of the flood of war and suffering which rolled over the countries watered by the Rhine and the Danube, the great northern boundaries of the Roman empire, and their vast tributary fountains during the like period as that marked by the second vial.¹

"And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire; and men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give Him glory."² Once more we find a parallel in the sounding of the fourth trumpet, and in due sequence, in these calamitous outpourings, we see the operation of this vial in the scorching military career of the first Napoleon; he who, like his trumpet prototype,³ compelled the Emperor to relinquish his ancient and acknowledged Roman rights, and himself assumed, as appurtenant to the prerogatives of his own imperial family, the secular inheritance of the Roman empire. And with regard to the wonderful rise and career of this phenomenon of that age, it may not be inappropriate to mention that Mr. Baxter, in one of his recent works, has derived the Buonaparte family in direct descent from Calomeros Comnenus,⁴ one of the last of the Byzantine emperors. I have not his book before me, and am therefore writing from recollection; but he states that a member of this family, some generations since, took refuge in Corsica, where he adopted the Italian form of the original name, and that this descent of the race of Buonaparte was subsequently acknowledged formally by the French authorities. If true, this is a singular historical fact, to say nothing of its more serious application; and assuming it to be so, I am driven to the belief that the present restored Napoleon dynasty is the eighth, or rather the resuscitated seventh head of the great secular power of the

¹ *Horæ Apocal.* iii. 332.

² *Rev.* xvi. 8.

³ *Odoacer.* See *supra* on Fourth Trumpet.

⁴ *Καλὸν μέρος*, Good Part, or Buona parte.

present age, now drawing to its close. Every historian admits that the rank and title of the original empire of Rome existed in the Emperors of Germany up to 1806, in which year that distinction was solemnly relinquished by the Emperor Francis, whose realms were then called "The Holy Roman Empire,"¹ and then Napoleon assumed the title of Emperor of France, and King of Rome. Then, as I apprehend, ceased the dynasty of the sixth head, or king, and arose the seventh,—short of duration, but fulfilling every prophetic symbol in relation to him; he was wounded almost to death; the sword well-nigh slew him; yet he died of a natural disease, and he was after his death restored, even bodily, to his own again; and even yet does that wounded head become resuscitated in more than its former vitality in that person with whom (humanly speaking) rests the peace of the present generation. I have not space to enter upon the full consideration of this subject; and indeed I prefer to draw my Outlines from more general inquiries; but I could not pass the point wholly unnoticed, and I commend it to the serious reflection of those who take an interest in events which certainly do seem to be closely connected with the prophetic announcements in relation to these days.

"And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains, and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."²

Still following the general principle of interpretation which has guided us in these inquiries, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the seat of the beast, so far as the worldly locality is concerned, is Rome. The

¹ Crowe's History of France, iii. 252. "With his declaration," says this historian, "may be considered to terminate the reign of the modern Cæsars." Napoleon assumed the imperial title in 1804.

² Rev. xvi. 10.

dragon originally gave to the beast his seat and great authority, and in those days his seat or throne was Rome ; and from that centre of authority up to the period of the Reformation *fully*, and from that period up to the moment under consideration in great *predominance*, have emanated the principles of the religion and policy of the western, I might have said the civilised, world. True, we have noticed, in the working of the preceding vial, the personal transfer of the imperial authority, and, as I have suggested, the new and short-lived seventh head arising in its full-blown power, and then becoming wounded almost unto death, and in a wondrous way resuscitated in the spirit of utter secularism, and cold selfishness, and lust of power, which have ever been the guiding principles of the fourth kingdom,¹ but the sedes,² or seat of the vast worldly influence, still was Rome in her divers complicities with the European Powers, until in the year 1809,³ the complete outpouring occurred, and Napoleon "issued his decrees for the final humbling and spoliation of the Romish Church and Pope.

And here I would call to the reader's mind the interpretation of Fleming upon this subject, taking especially into consideration the time at which his work was published, and the necessarily imperfect means before him by which he arrived at his conclusions. His book was published on the 1st of January, 1701, and, to use his own language, on the first day of that year and century ; and, with variations which almost illustrate the principle that the exception proves the rule, he has carried on the history of the seals, and the trumpets, and the vials, even up to the fifth outpouring ; and these are his words as to the fifth vial, whose effusion he expected to take place, as in fact it did, somewhere about one hundred years after the time

¹ Crowe, in his *History of France*, iii. 232, thus briefly characterises Napoleon the First :—"The absence of all passion and all *enthusiasm* is selfishness in the highest degree ; and such became the *all-absorbing malady*, the distinguishing trait of Napoleon."

² *The Holy See.*

³ *Horæ Apocal.* iii. 347-355.

at which he was writing.¹ "The fifth vial which is to be poured out on the seat of the beast, or the dominions that more immediately belong to and depend upon the Roman See; that, I say, this judgment will probably begin about the year 1794, and expire about the year 1848, which is the date of the twelve hundred and sixty years in prophetic account when they are reckoned from the year 606."² I confess that I think it a harder effort of disbelief to call these mere coincidences, than to accept them as highly reasonable explanations of the perpetually unfolding prophetic history, as recorded by that sure word which is truth. And here I will venture to transcribe a closing observation by Mr. Keightley, in his "Outlines of History,"³ on the termination of the power of the first Napoleon in 1815, which seems to me peculiarly appropriate to our present reflections. "At this momentous era in the history of the world, we terminate our rapid view of its destinies; the agency of a great moral superintending power is everywhere perceptible; the slow but sure castigation of national vice everywhere meets our view; but man will not learn wisdom; and the latest periods of history present the same scenes of unblushing violations of faith and justice which occurred ere he had received the lessons of experience." Forty years have passed since these words were written, and their present application is yet more cogent than it even then was.

We are, however, now not only on the verge, but in the midst of those days long foretold, and now actually present with us, and we can no longer dare to speak in terms of positive assurance of the events which are crowding around us; yet in that spirit of humble faith which distinguishes the reliant hope of the Christian from the presumptuous assurance of the fanatic, or

¹ Fleming—Rise and Fall of Papacy. Edit. 1848 (Johnstone, London and Edinr.), p. 70.

² "We may justly reckon," says Fleming, p. 38, "that the Papal Head took its first rise from the remarkable year 606, when Phocas did in a manner devolve the government of the West upon him (*i.e.* the Pope) by giving him the title of 'Universal Bishop!'"

³ P. 439.

the malignant sneer of the unbeliever, we may receive the further announcements of the Apocalyptic seer.

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared."¹

Here, again, we have a parallelism with the imagery of the sixth trumpet; and the locality of the scene is, as then, the Euphrates. That by the drying up of that great river is indicated the declension and final destruction of the Mohammedan influence, as under the preceding vial was shown the commencing judgment upon the secular power of the Papacy, I dare not doubt. In truth, the facts are before our eyes in the daily announcements of the public journals; but who are the kings of the East, whose way is by this exhaustive process to be prepared?

When Fleming wrote, one hundred and seventy years before this day, and on this vial, he thus said:—"Seeing the sixth trumpet brought the Turks from beyond Euphrates, from their crossing which river they date their rise, the sixth vial dries up their waves, and exhausts their power, as the means and way to prepare and dispose the eastern kings and kingdoms to renounce their heathenish and Mohammedan errors, in order to their receiving and embracing Christianity."² I have quoted this passage at length, because it appears to me to be a very striking instance of what, in its lowest acceptance, I may venture to call historical sagacity, in the application of these prophetic emblems; but later interpreters have held that the expression "kings of the east," or, as it should be more correctly rendered, "the kings from the rising of the sun,"³ applies in a more particular manner to the Jews,⁴ and their restoration to

¹ Rev. xvi. 12.

² Rise and Fall of Papacy, p. 70.

³ "Ἰνα ἐτοιμασθῇ ἡ ὁδὸς τῶν βασιλείων τῶν ἀπο ἀνατολῶν ἡλίου.

⁴ Possibly the lost tribes more particularly. The Jew proper, of Judah, or Jerusalem, is scattered amongst *all* nations. The *Israelite* may indeed be yet unrecognised amongst the powers of *the East*. When Israel was carried into captivity by Shalmanezar, *he planted them in Halah, and in Ilabor, by the river of Gozan (a*

their ancient kingdom. It is indeed clear that these grand events, though close upon the threshold, are yet unfulfilled, and therefore it becomes us not to scrutinise too closely, or to speak with too great an assumption of certainty, upon a subject not yet perfectly developed, though evidently in a course of rapid realisation. The reader has only to cast the most cursory glance upon the upheavings of the nations in relation to the eastern portions of the world, the encroachments of Russia, alike upon the Turkish provinces, and even, though distantly, upon our own Indian frontiers; the gradual and slow yet sure decadence of the Mohammedan influences; the vast British empire now ruling amongst so large an encampment of the tents of Shem; and the general uneasiness which is riving all the ancient peoples of the East asunder, changing their customs, and, as we vainly think, bringing them more fully within the comity of nations, and he must perceive that a work is there in progress far beyond the understanding of man to conceive, the strength of man to bring about, or the comprehension of man to accept in all its wonderful results. Still looking, with straining eye, through the clouds that impede the imperfect mental vision, I think we may venture to assume that, ere the last dregs of this vial shall have been outpoured, we shall behold the way prepared for the grand advent of Him whose right it is to reign; and as part of that preparation, and nearly concurrent with the great event, the restoration of the children of Israel to their long lost inheritance.

But we have now got beyond the limits of what I believe to be accomplished facts; the vial in its first sprinklings apparently in operation has not yet arrived at its final effusion. In the supplemental vision which accompanies it, there is much at the present time for serious and reverent consideration, which we must reserve for another chapter.

tributary of the Tigris), and in the cities of the Medes (2 Kings xvii. 6), and therefore beyond the Euphrates.

XI.

FROGS—SUPPLEMENT OF SIXTH VIAL.

A SUPPLEMENTAL vision now bespeaks our attention. We have passed the confines of history, and have entered upon the present; we have no longer the materials for interpretation beyond what we can derive from the analogy of that which is gone by; but we have a fearful sight, and a warning voice; and, if my continuous impression be correct, the one is addressed to the ears, the other to the eyes, both to the inmost heart and understanding of the men of the Present Day. "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs¹ come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils working miracles,² which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle³ of that great day of God Almighty. Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.

We must, as I have suggested, read this passage as supplementary to the primary effects of the sixth vial's effusion; the dragon, parent and source of all evil, first breathes forth the pestilence of his own abominations.⁴ Cast out from heaven, and taking his last refuge in this

¹ Rev. xvi. 13.

² Correctly, signs—σημεία.

³ More strictly "war;" πόλεμον, a continuous struggle, in contradistinction from μάχην, a mere incidental fight, or battle.

⁴ As to the plague of frogs, see Exod. viii. It is worth while to note the universality of each plague. In Egypt the frogs prevailed "in all the borders," and they covered the land of Egypt. So, in the passage before us, the like spirits go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, meaning, apparently, beyond the limits of the prophetic earth, even into the outer districts of the created world.

realm of his usurpation, he exhales the pestilent spirit of rebellion against the Most High, and with a malignity of which he alone is master, he seeks to increase the diabolic hosts of his own fellow-condemned ones by perpetually muttering among the peoples, "No God—no God." And this is the early croak of the foul and unclean spirit which in various shapes is now going forth, and asserting supremacy over what I may venture to call the universal world; the spirit, first, of genial inquiry; the spirit, next, of advanced doubt, or scepticism; the spirit, then, of positive infidelity; the spirit, finally, of utter atheism, ignoring God, and denying man, save as a creature of chance and necessity;—the spirit in another development of Antichristianism, for he is himself Antichrist;¹ and probably will in that character make his final development. And how is he working at this moment? The grand deceiver, he gives life, and spirit, and essence to all that is evil and untrue; and as he did of old, when he was permitted to become an instrument² of destruction to Ahab ere the dogs licked up his blood near the pool of Samaria, he still goeth forth a lying spirit in the mouths of too many of the professed prophets of the Lord, and he prevaieth; and this discordant croaking of the first frog issues from the mouth of the great dragon himself. Alike in spirit, though varying at first in its blatant tones, is the hoarse croaking of the same frog expressing in half-audible sounds, apparently irreconcilable, yet in meaning identical, *despotism* and *democracy*;—strange utterances; each expressive from opposite hills, like Ebal and Gerizim,³ of curses repeated, curses reverberated, until the King of kings, by taking to Himself His great power and reigning, shall convert the accumulated curses into a blessing in the repression and final annihilation of the author of them; and these utterances are but the exponents of the lawlessness of that Satanic *pride*, which caused the expulsion of its originator from the seats of bliss to the

¹ See more fully hereon, chap. xiii.

² 2 Kings xxiii.

³ Deut. xxvii.; Rev. xi. 17.

utter regions of darkness, whence the prolific spawn are insinuating themselves into the cabinets of the great ones of the earth, and the secret conclaves of the traitor, the rebel, the public assassin, and the private conspirator. And direct from that noisome plague we may yet hear another note, less grating, perhaps, at first upon the ear, but if possible more deceptive than either of the sounds which we have before heard, and in its results perhaps even more dangerous; the so-called *spiritualism*, which has infected the present generation; coming amongst us in a still small manner, the amusement of a leisure hour, the passing inquiry of the curious, the marvel of the credulous, the scoff of the scientific purist, the ready instrument in the hands of the charlatan, this prevailing modern spiritualism, and I therein include mesmerism, and all its cognate mental operations,—is, from the palace to the peasant's cottage, sapping imperceptibly the faith, contravening the religious experiences, and insensibly deadening the real vital Christianity of immense numbers of the people. False, yet true; vain and imaginary as a dream, yet real as the sternest fact, it is one of those strong delusions which Satan¹ has been permitted to work amongst us; and it is another direct instance of the operation of his personal power in signs and lying wonders. These, and such as these, are the results of the diabolic croakings of that pestilent reptile first breathed from the Satanic mouth; there is no intermediate agent; they are his own direct action upon the heart of man, whose thoughts, as of old, are only evil continually, and thus are they working at the present day.

But Satan² has in the world his own secular image and counterpart; He has set him up, and given him his seat and great authority; and while the higher and spiritual attributes, the influences upon the heart and soul of man, are exercised by the chief of the powers of darkness, there is an important part to be performed by One whom here he hath made his colleague. The

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10.

² *Prophetic Outlines*—The Four Kingdoms, pp. 38-44.

world is governed by the beast—still strong, powerful, rampant, endued with all the evil of his principal, but without his prescient knowledge of the future ; infidel, because he knows not faith ; lawless, because he comprehends not restraint ; despotic and democratic, because his own will is his only law ; of the earth, earthy ; essentially secular, because he knows nought beyond the present world and its material things ; and selfish, because self is the only acting principle of his existence ; he exercises the diabolic power of his chief in a world wholly given up to his usurpation. And forth from the yawning mouth of that beast issues the next frog fraught with the reckless desperation, the selfish secularism, which would characterise the man of the world whose creed is, “ Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die ”—die, and fear and hope no future ; die, and become extinguished in oblivion ; and this is the next principle which Satan through this agent employs in promulgating his worldly creed, and with what results ? Self and secularism, terms almost synonymous, prevail in all the relations of life—national, public, private. Vainly did the apostle exclaim, “ Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world ; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him : for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world ; ”¹ and as said another, “ From whence come wars and fightings among you ? Come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members ? ”² Even so. Ignoring God, at all events, when man’s interests are apparently at stake, the states of the world battle with each other, for their national, and therefore selfish, objects are opposed ; and thus rages the lust of power. Commerce, which is but self in another form of deification, steps in with her treaties and her tariffs, and proclaims peace, and for a moment stills the storm by a power more sordid than that which evoked it ; and the lust of money becomes ascendant, only to give way in its turn to some new development of the intensity of

¹ 1 John ii. 15.

² James iv. 1.

the all-pervading principle. But reduce the national to the social question; self there reigns supreme. Look at our public companies; at our limited liabilities; at our ruinous bubble schemes; at the fights and struggles in the arena of the law over the relics of the wreck which may have floated up to shore from the maelstrom of a great panic, or the collapse of a vast fabric built on credit; and then say whether self is not the sole moving principle in this class of affairs. Ay, go even into our social and festive meetings; is not some worldly object the result at which they aim? Go yet further; go, man, individual man, whosoever thou mayest be, for one moment retire within the recesses of thine own breast, and in the spirit of the inspired passages which I have quoted, consider if they be not applicable even to thyself; thyself, which is thy world; thy Deity, of which thou art thine own worshipper. Alas! what are our petty quarrels, our family feuds, our village jealousies, our social rivalries, our party divisions, our political polemics, our actual wars of destruction, growing and increasing daily, but the varied tones of that hoarse croaking reptile who alone could exist in the poisonous atmosphere in which he was breathed forth from the foul mouth of the vicegerent of the dragon.

But the beast has his own coadjutor; his apparent servant; his genius of greater intensity of evil even than himself; and this it is which marks these times with such terrible malignity and fearful warning. This is the lamb-like, and apparently gracious being, whose fearful character we have elsewhere¹ had occasion to consider, and who imparted the mystic terribleness to the fourth beast of Daniel; the great mental power, whose recent increasing development man has proudly characterised as the "March of Intellect," exhibiting itself in numberless examples, all directed to the glorification of the beast secular, to the exclusion, in most instances, and in others to the mere passive or negative acceptance of *God*, and in all to the abuse and perversion of His *holiest attributes*; the spirit of Satan inspiring the

¹ *Prophetic Outlines—The Four Kingdoms*, pp. 53-56.

natural man, instead of the spirit of life breathed into him at first, whereby he had become a living soul. And forth from that subsidiary, yet guiding beast, issues the third frog. Like the reptile insinuating bad thoughts into the ear of Eve sleeping in Eden, he goes forth with a low croak, hoarsely whispering his malignant mysteries to the godless being to whom he is sent by the arch-fiend as a priest and a counsellor. Forth goes that frog, croaking in the cabinet, in the senatorial chamber, in the cathedral, the church, the chapel; in the hall of the learned society; in the closet of the student; in the lawyer's chamber; in the merchant's counting-house; forth goes he, and his croak is "World, world, world! worship the world; it is the impersonation of my mighty principal; I have enshrined him, and consecrated his image, and it is wonder-working. Set it up in your house of prayer, in your literary institution, in your hall of commerce, in your court of justice, in your private chamber; worship it, and say, Hear us! and you shall be heard." And thus it is that every human institution, whether religious or civil, is tainted with a spirit which man may for the moment conceive to be a symptom of the advance of the age towards material and moral perfection, but which is in fact the strongest proof of its decadence, in rapidly increasing ratio, towards the impending crisis.

And these are the spirits of devils, working miracles, the arrogant spirit of the dragon of infidelity; the selfish spirit of the secular beast, who regards nought but this world, and the things thereof; the superstitious spirit of the false prophet, the lamb-like beast, who set up the worldly deity, and compels mankind to worship it. A fearful trinity of evil, such as only the chief fallen to the lowest abyss of remorseless guilt could have conceived or instituted. And what is the purpose for which this hateful trio issue forth? "They go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."¹

I have endeavoured very briefly to hint at the re-

¹ Rev. xvi. 14.

spective special missions and modes of operation of the three frogs ; it can scarcely be needful to suggest to the reader that they are in truth gathering the nations together for a mighty struggle. The symptoms of that struggle have been long apparent—the skirmishes of the mental conflict commenced long since ; passages at arms, even in a material shape, have already taken place. Look at Europe, at America, even at the seethings of China¹ and Japan—look, in brief, to every portion of the world, civilised or uncivilised, Christian or unchristian, and we become aware that everywhere is the perpetual din of war, or worse, rumour of war, and preparation for its dire emergencies. Genius and talent are incessantly employed in the perfection of arms of precision, which to even the most recent days would have appeared incredible. Armies are despatched to battle by railway, orders of the day are transmitted by electric telegraph, campaigns are now completed in as many weeks as heretofore they would have occupied years, and yet the whole civilised world are preparing more and more earnestly for a still greater contest which all anticipate, but none understand. And Commerce, child of Mammon, sustains the armaments, and the speculator upon the Stock Exchange utters the oracles and works the wires which sway the destinies of nations.² I have dwelt upon this portion of the Outline rather longer than I had intended, but if the convictions which, in the consideration of it, have forced

¹ It may be that the impending crisis may not be intended yet to affect those ancient realms whose fulness may not perhaps have completely arrived ; and this for wise purposes of Providence which, as it appears to me, are not indistinctly revealed in Scripture. It is evident that even the millennial reign of blessedness will still retain a missionary character, infinitely more powerful and effective than the greatest results of the present age. I dare not now touch upon this deep inquiry.

² The entire standing army of Rome, at the time of her greatest martial strength, was thirty legions, which, at their full complement of 12,500 men, would have been 37,500, and the whole *military establishment* of the empire never exceeded 400,000. —*Sismondi—Fall of the Roman Empire*, i. 29. The embodied *armies of Europe* are now counted by their millions.

themselves upon my mind with a cogency even greater than has before attended them be correct, I cannot express too strongly my perfect belief, nor urge too earnestly its full acceptance by the reader, that even this very day in which we are living is the era of the going forth of these three great spirits of evil, and that they have well-nigh executed their accursed mission. It is true that I have in my Outline of the Four Kingdoms¹ expressed a like opinion even from the general view which I then took ; but the collateral sketch which I have now drawn, derived as the reader will perceive from the more immediate and minute announcement of the things that should come to pass in the latter period of the fourth beast's reign ere the times of the Gentiles shall be fully accomplished, and while the veil is still resting upon the heart of the Jew, assures me, with an authority which I feel to be irresistible, that the "Spirit of the present age" is the result of the united action of these hateful and apparently contradictory principles of infidelity, secularism, and superstition, with all their attendant spawn of diabolic malignity.

But the scene of the battle of that great day of God Almighty it is not for us to describe ; the not distant rumours of its advancing hosts are even now sounding in our ears ; the tremendous shock is yet future ; how far future, who shall say ? Let us listen to the warning voice, and profit by it, for it requires no comment.

"Behold, I come as a thief ; blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Let us wait, and watch, and pray, for "He which testifieth these things saith, Behold, I come quickly."

¹ P. 57.

XII.

SEVENTH VIAL.

THUS have the times of the Gentiles, as I humbly believe, developed themselves, so far as they have yet received their accomplishment; and we have been enabled to fix, with much assurance of precision, our present position upon the chart of prophetic history. It is a position which well bespeaks the solemn consideration of every one whose mind carries him beyond the instant affairs of the fleeting present. We now contemplate with awe the effusion of the seventh, and last vial, and its prospective consequences. "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."¹ I apprehend that this portion of the revealed Word is still unaccomplished; though it is an event instant and imminent, and at our very doors; and it is worth consideration that, fearful as are the consequences of this outpouring, they are also universal; they are poured forth, not into the earth, but into its circumambient air; they proceed from heaven, from the temple of heaven, ay, even from the Throne itself; *nought of the contents comes from earth or earth's*

¹ Rev. xvi. 17.

inhabitants—all is from the throne of judgment, the throne of the Godhead; and the volume of ether in which earth revolves is suffused with the last dregs of this last vial of the wrath of God. And “It is done,” is the solemn thunder-peal that from the throne rolls forth in self-multiplying echoes through the vaults of the empyrean. It is done; the mystery of God is finished. Let earth rejoice, her warfare is well-nigh accomplished, her last sharp throes will soon be over. Let heaven rejoice, the Church militant will soon become the Church triumphant. Let the universe rejoice, the long permitted strife with evil is about to be terminated, and, while Satan is relegated to his deep abyss, all creation redeemed will be received into the inheritance of the sons of God. But there is yet a tempest, and a storm, and a struggle; the work of the repression of evil must be fully accomplished, and the spirit of evil will resist unto the last, and therefore I suspect that the outpourings of this vial will mark that time which our Saviour Himself informs us no flesh can endure unless the days shall be shortened. Like the stone cut out of the mountain without hands which smites the image upon its feet until the very dust of the triturated particles is blown away, so the hail falls from heaven in ponderous masses, and men, as despairing demons, blaspheme God in the midst of their destruction, while earth reels and quakes, with physical, probably as well as moral convulsions; and the great city¹ is divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fall,² and every island flies away, and the mountains are not found.

But in the midst of this national and social confusion, great Babylon³ comes into remembrance before God, and it befalls her, who had made the kings of the earth drunk with the contents of the goblet of her abomina-

¹ The whole civilised world becomes perhaps infidel, secular, and superstitious, or rational.

² All governments and institutions probably become dissolved in the universal anarchy preceding the Second Advent.

³ See Prophetic Outlines—Four Kingdoms, pp. 60, 61.

tions, to be forced herself to drain to its uttermost dregs the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

On this subject, however, I have elsewhere¹ touched ; yet it may be well simply to re-state the present position of the Gentile world in accordance with each series of our Outlines. Satan, the old usurping dragon, reigns in his primary characteristic of *infidelity*. The beast, Satan's counterpart, acts as his vicegerent, the secular,² great and strong being, as originally represented to Daniel, who treads everything else under his feet ; while the false prophet (or the lamb-like beast), emanation from Satan and his counterpart, adds intensity to both. The unchaste woman, priestess of the dragon, and mistress of the beast, and in close alliance with the false prophet, still holds her haughty sway, and sitteth upon her seven-hilled throne, not as a widow forlorn, but as a queen³ triumphant, and still proffers her cup of abomination to the rulers of the nations ; while in her faith and patience the sun-clothed woman continues in her place in the wilderness, awaiting the joyful announcement, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, when she, with her chosen ones, collected out of every nation under heaven, shall be summoned to the marriage supper of the Lamb and herself.

And from the present, which we have noted in the foregoing chapter as the closing series of the times of

¹ Prophetic Outlines—Four Kingdoms, pp. 53-57, *et seq.*

² Epicurean — expressing philosophically the principle, *dum vivimus vivamus*. It is worthy of note, perhaps only curious, that the name of Rome (*Ρωμη*) is strength, and that she has been known as Valentia, the Latin equivalent.—See Ainsworth, *in verbo*. Looking at the description of the fourth beast, who was *strong* exceedingly, and then at Rome's endurance through more than two millennia, in comparison with the short-lived, golden-headed Babylonian power, and the next two brief empires of Persia and Greece, we find matter for serious consideration. Babylon (confusion) soon became confounded ; Rome (strength) has existed until now.

³ The present presumptuous pretensions of the Papal See to *infallibility* and *supreme* temporal power strangely corroborate this *scriptural description* of the last days of the unchaste woman.

the Gentiles, we are awaiting the solemn events now impending the outpouring of the last of the dread vials of divine indignation ; I attempt not to raise the veil, or to display an unreal or imaginary scene. Scripture certainly does unfold to us, as through a glass darkly, the grand intentions of the Author of that sacred record in favour of his last creation, Man ; and the calendar of completed and perpetually self-completing prophecy is perhaps the most convincing assurance that in the present day we can have, that in that record we are not entangling our imaginations with cunningly-devised fables, but that we are tracing the revealed outline of the divine plan upon the vast chart of truth ; and thus looking around us with the eye of faith which, though it may be the evidence of things not seen, is an assurance which will never fail us, we may rely that our bearings are not very far out of the proper track, and that our general conclusions as to our present position, and our future hopes, are sound and reasonable. The future is indeed shown to us with sufficient clearness to preserve us from great error in our course, dark as it may apparently be ; there is a fearful struggle before us ; it will be terrific ; it must be decisive ; and for the elect's sake, we have the Saviour's own assurance that it shall be shortened. On that struggle we are now entering ; of the result we are assured, but we cannot scan too curiously the various phases of it. To none but those inspired has it been granted to read the future, but to every inquiring Christian may be the grace to observe the present aspect and bearing of his own times, and comparing his observation with the sacred record, to test its past truth ; and thence, in unswerving faith, to rely upon its yet unfolded developments.¹ And thus we stand at this moment upon the

¹ This, I think, is the peculiar blessing pronounced upon the prophetic student in Rev. i. 3, distinctively from him whom I may perhaps designate as the Christian *positive* ; who is so simply because he has been born such ; who owes his creed to the accident of his birth, and therefore might have been a Mohammedan or a Hindoo ; and, alas ! we cannot conceal it from ourselves that this is a very large class of professing Christians.

margin of the completion of prophecy, and of the expiration of history, so far as the secular ages are concerned. Scripture indeed abounds with grand pictures of another dispensation, another realm of ineffable blessedness, ere that great time when all things having been subdued unto the Son, God Himself shall have become all in all; and in the foreground of those grand pictures, and next to the necessary accretion of glory to the Godhead, is the eternal salvation of Him who, created a little lower than the angels, it may be to supply the void made in the heavenly hosts by the defalcation through pride of the once bright Son of the Morning,¹ has had to endure the short struggle of that fallen spirit to seduce Him into his own evil ranks, and, if possible, to make Him tenfold more a child of sin than himself. But let us revert to the record; the seven vial-bearing angels have performed their office,² and one of them comes to the seer, and explains to him, in plain and intelligible language, the meaning of one great figurative representation which had been exhibited to him, having especial reference to the corrupting influence which would in these days prevail over Christendom. And first is the destruction of the unchaste woman effected originally from within by her own paramours,³ completed finally by the overwhelming judgments from on high. Then in swift succession follow the events which I have rapidly sketched elsewhere—sketched, as I believe Scripture has drawn them, closing in the final battle;

¹ Short in His presence to whom a thousand years are as one day, and before whom we now all are, from the Fall to this moment, as the creatures of that day.

² Rev. xvii., xviii.

³ *Prophetic Outlines—The Four Kingdoms*, p. 57, *et seq.* I am aware that one of the reviewers of my former Series has questioned my principle of the immediate fall of the Papacy, because present circumstances indicate the resuscitation of her vitality—at least, in our own kingdom; but I venture still to adhere to my original impression that alike her temporal and spiritual sway are doomed. Like an exhausted torch she may, for a moment, flare up, but it *will be only* to be extinguished in the overwhelming light of the *Sun of Righteousness*, who will arise shortly with healing in His beams.

a mental battle, in which character its early skirmishes have long since begun ; a material battle, for the mind's results are material ; a conclusive battle, for the strain of humanity can be extended no further.

And thus we have arrived at the same point which our first inquiries indicated ; strange, yet true is it, that in whatever light we contemplate the prophetic revelations, we shall find the same result attending our investigations, and that the day now impending is apparently the common point of convergence at which every line meets. We have hitherto touched upon two only of those lines ; the secular, as first revealed to Daniel ; and that mixed portion of the secular and the religious, which is the subject of this series—each a grand theme of reverential study. But the humble and prayerful watcher will find that all the other prophetic data lead the mind irresistibly to the same conclusions ; and I believe that the continued earnest investigation of the subject will more and more open up those blessed truths of Scripture which are even now casting a flood of dawning splendour upon the era of millennial felicity which, after a darksome and tempestuous, yet shortened interval, is about to succeed the long and tumultuous times of the Gentiles.

XIII.

ANTICHRIST.

I AM reluctant to quit this portion of our inquiry without a brief consideration of the important subject which heads this chapter ; but I approach it with a great feeling of dread, yet not unmingled with a firm belief that my conclusions are sound. What, or who is Antichrist ? and what will be his development ? The question is one which has engaged not only much learned attention, but has occupied alike the simple inquirer after truth, and the acute and critical theo-

logian. I dare to think that Scripture, on this point, has been somewhat wrested from its original meaning.

If my memory serves me correctly, the word "Antichrist" occurs only in the Epistles of St. John, and these are the instances:—1 John ii. 18, "As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists; whereby ye may know that it is the last time." In the 22d verse of the same chapter, the apostle says: "He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son;" and in the fourth chapter of the same Epistle, in the third verse, he says: "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world." And in the Second Epistle of the same inspired writer, at the seventh verse, is this passage: "For many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver, and an antichrist." I rather think that I have quoted the only passages in Scripture in which this word occurs; and before we go further, it will be well to consider these citations.

The Epistles of St. John are believed to have been written about the year 96 of the Christian era, rather more, therefore, than sixty years after the death and resurrection of our Saviour, and by the last survivor of all His personal disciples; by him indeed whom, with all his universal love, Jesus had especially loved; but who yet, to human eyes, was left to buffet the storms and trials of persecution long, long, after all the others who had sat with Him at His last social meal upon earth had completed their testimony, and had entered into their rest. Heresies, we well know, crept at a very early date into the Christian Church; and we may gather from the very passages which I have quoted, and from many others scattered abroad in the Acts of the Apostles and the subsequent Epistles, that one of *the leading* errors was the denial of the divinity of the *Saviour*—a heresy which struck at the root of the *blessed dispensation* of grace which then completed

and superseded that of the Sacred Law ; and it was essentially necessary to preserve the minds of the early Christians right upon that point. We indeed know¹ that St. John had been present at that most interesting conversation with our Lord, when He uttered the two-fold exposition of the signs preceding the fall of Jerusalem, and the termination of the age—two widely distant events, which they conceived to be one and identical, wherein Jesus says : “ Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many ; ” and again : “ Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not ; for there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”² It is hence pretty evident that the Saviour had during His earthly sojourn cautioned the disciples against the appearance of rival Messiahs ; and it must be remembered that at the primary fulfilment of this prediction, on the destruction of Jerusalem, successive impostors persuaded the people to follow them into the desert, promising them signs and wonders to be done by the providence of God ; and this had taken place many years prior to the date of St. John’s Epistles. It may therefore be inferred that the Antichrist of which John spake was rather the emanation of that Spirit of Evil who was then, and still is, perpetually opposing himself to the blessed Redeemer in all His labours of love for mankind ; whose hydra-heads, numerous as the Satanic legion cast out from the possessed, would be continually and successively rising, bruised, from the ground, and leading away, with the assumption of Divinity, but with diabolic artifice, the hapless children of disobedience. It would be too long, and too intricate a discussion to consider this subject in all its bearings ; but I confess that, so far as I can bring my mind to a conclusion upon it, the term “ Antichrist ” is more an expression applicable to the spiritual opponent of “ The Christ ” in His internal influence upon the human mind, than to any special or

¹ Mark xiii. 3.

² Matt. xxiv. 5, 23, 24.

individual form of bodily development; and if this impression be correct, the names of Satan and Anti-christ will be, in their spiritual sense, simply synonymous; even as "God the Son, Redeemer of the world," is synonymous with "Christ the Saviour."

But under another figure of speech, and at an earlier time, the Apostle Paul¹ speaks to the Thessalonians, who from some previous warnings had been looking out for the instant return of the lately ascended Christ; and reminds them that before that great event shall take place there must first come a falling away, and the "Man of Sin" must be revealed, the Son of Perdition. This, I believe, has been read in accordance with the passages in St. John, to which I have before referred, as having relation, under rather a different phrase, to the same person, and the same series of events; and it has been held that they refer to the actual development of a mortal being finally intended for perdition. I express *any* opinion upon this point with the utmost diffidence, because I am aware that my inference will differ from the conclusions of some at whose feet I would thankfully receive instruction; but I am forced to confess that to my mind the *Man of Sin* described by St. Paul is no other than the actual and personal revelation of Satan (in the guise, it may be, of mortal man, which he may possibly assume in his frantic despair), shortly prior to the glorious advent of Him who must ever be, in spirit and reality, in relation to the fallen and restored human family, "*The Son of Man*;" nor can I receive into my mind the belief that the Man of Sin, here spoken of, can, more than the Son of Man to whom he is opposed, be any mere mortal being; although I am aware that there are those who not only entertain this opinion, but have actually gone to the length of professing to identify the very individual to whom this bad eminence is to be imparted. The mystery of iniquity, or lawlessness, spoken of by St. Paul as working in his days, is, I apprehend, none other than the active spirit of Anti-

¹ 2 Thess. xi.

christ which has been perpetually in the world ; and ere the final close of his long struggle against the triumphant heir, I confess that it seems to me more in accordance with the prophetic indications that Satan should himself assume the character of this fearful revelation, and, before his last overthrow, make his supernatural appearance as the embodied antagonist of Him who was Himself originally made flesh that He might destroy the works of the devil, than that any mere member of our redeemed race should be thus marked out for the special doom pronounced upon the great Deceiver. And that the principle of this Spirit of Antichrist, as described by St. John, is at the present moment fearfully predominant, who shall deny? Are not the infidel writings, the infidel speeches, the infidel exhibitions of the present day a sufficient development of him? That he may be shown in a yet more fearful and personal realisation, I dare not question ; but it can only be to his immediate restriction, and final destruction.

It is indeed one of the many crafty devices by which Satan is now endeavouring to draw off the contemplation of the Christian world from the great impending crisis of the dispensation, to distract the mind by minor differences of faith and practice, which, however lamentable they may be, are yet lighter than the dust in the balance when compared with the fearful consequences which are daily resulting from the insidious operation of that evil spirit upon humanity, by placing reason and human intellect above the authority of God's own revelation, and this I view with more dread than any other symptom of these soul-chilling times, as being of itself an awful present appearance of the Man of Sin. Split up into divisions and subdivisions—Ritualists, Anti-ritualists, Churchmen, high, broad, low, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Conformers, Nonconformers—of fifty varying names and creeds, yet all professing the one great name and faith of Christ Jesus, the theological hatred has fallen among us, and many of the divided flock desert not only their fold, but the

great Shepherd also, and take refuge in that dreariest of all dread deserts, the hyperborean darkness of infidelity. This is the great Antichristian danger which now threatens us; the culmination of the free-thinking principle which takes its rise in often the most honest and upright of hearts from an overweening reliance upon human reason—*threatens*, did I say?—which is now actually come among us; and, with a desperate boldness, exhibiting the rampancy of despair guided by the subtlety of the Arch-fiend, attacks no longer the outposts of the faith, but denies the God who made us as an impostor; the revelation which He gave us as a fable; the salvation which He has wrought for us as a phantasm more shadowy than the cloud embraced by Ixion. And this Germany has taught; France has received; Rome, looking on, and biding her own time, has silently encouraged; and, alas, our own beloved country,¹ through her clerical dignitaries, her distinguished professors, her learned laymen, has adopted and promulgated. From time to time this malignant serpent has raised himself from his grovelling condition, and as often bruised the heel of man, only to be trodden down for the moment, and again to rise and utter his discordant voice, and then once more cower into the dust; but he has now reared his crested head in Satanic pride, and darting out his forked tongue, and hissing forth the shibboleth of "Human Reason," he casts his fascinating eye over the affrighted soul, and paralyses all the energies of the human mind.

And this Spirit now thus assaults and destroys Christendom in all her phases, true or untrue; real, or but professing; and it is, as I believe, the spirit and the presence of Antichrist himself, whether yet to have a more personal development I dare not say; but it is my belief that his present prevalence in the world, even as thus roughly sketched, sufficiently fulfils the Scriptures relating to him. Prince of the Powers of the Air,

¹ See the mass of infidel publications which now issue from the English press, some of which have come under my notice while preparing these hasty pages for the printer.

he musters his rebel forces to oppose the triumphant advent of the King of kings. His thunders of infidelity already roll—his forked lurid lightnings of superstition already glare forth—his cold pelting hail of self and secularism already falls with freezing and numbing violence around; and, as the genius of that fell tempest when at its height, he may himself in person come amongst us to direct its course and rule its progress. But beyond the roll, and flash, and roar of the elemental strife are the not distant signs and sounds of angelic hosts following their triumphant Lord, and he who thus has lashed the nations into rage, already writhing with the eternal agony of the wrath of Deity, rushes to the place prepared for him; and the celestial standards wave over the ruins of a desolated world—desolated but to be restored in more than pristine beauty.

Thus, in our brief outline of the closing "Times of the Gentiles," I have endeavoured to consider a point which I believe some of the interpreters of prophetic history conceive to be yet unaccomplished. I trust that I am not presumptuous in expressing my strong belief that in spirit, if not in actual reality, that grievous development has long since taken place. We have the highest authority for knowing that Elias, long foretold, came in the person of the Baptist, though the Jew still expects him, and possibly that expectation may to the Jew be verified; in like manner the Antichristian development has, as I suspect, long since taken place, though possibly it may yet occur in a more fearful realisation; but he will be most wise who looks upon the analogy of our Saviour's own explanation; and, profiting by the sad experience of the last eighteen hundred years, arrives at the conclusion, and acts upon the belief, that this preliminary hath been accomplished, that Satan and Antichrist are identical, and that there is nothing to hinder, in that respect, the instant close of this dispensation. I had not intended, in this series, to touch upon the subject of this chapter further than I have already done in the consideration of the Frog era, to which the present activity of Satan adds but

intensity of evil ; but it has been suggested to me that it is a question too practical and urgent for mere passing note at a period when the devil is so plainly assembling all his forces for the great battle of Armageddon ; and therefore, at the risk of some repetition, I have added this chapter to the present series. I trust it will not be deemed irrelevant.

That the consideration of the whole subject which we have been discussing—a subject of transcendent personal and general importance, may be practically blessed, alike to the reader and the writer, by teaching each, more and more, to search the sacred records whence these thoughts have been derived, is my earnest and prayerful hope ; and with a sure faith that this hope will not be disappointed, I commend this Second Series of my slight “Outlines” to the Public.

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